

Jasper Fairfax



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JASPER FAIRFAX

OF A FORMER BOOK BY THE SAME AUTHOR
THE LITERARY WORLD, BOSTON, SAID :

“ Our reading of it has discovered in it more of the elements of that long expected product, the great American novel, than we have found in any recent work of fiction. The subject is thoroughly, intensely American ; the book is right out of the soil ; it is like a block of New England granite, or one of the big trees of California ; it has large stature, reserve force, abundant play of power ; its intellectual endowment is marked ; it has character, incident, sentiment, and passion ; it is virile, natural, life-like, dramatic, absorbing.

Nothing is exaggerated. The tale has the calm, plain, terrible intensity of truth. It is told with the self-possession of an eye witness. To those who have nerve for the tragic, who can bear to stand and see sin work itself out into the wages of death, we commend it as one of the most original, able, and remarkable of recent novels.”

JASPER FAIRFAX

BY

MARGARET HOLMES

AUTHOR OF

"Manitou," "The Price of the Ring"



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Jasper Fairfax

JASPER FAIRFAX.

CHAPTER I.

"Tell me, Doctor, how long can I live?"

"Many years I hope;" but Doctor Dorne did not meet the eyes of his patient as he spoke. He kept his finger on her wrist, and dampened the bandage about her head with a sponge.

"Why should you hope, or say you hope when you know my hours, possibly my moments are but few?"

The injured woman panted for breath, but, with an effort that started the crimson stain through the bandage about her temples and deepened the pallor around her mouth she continued:

"I know the truth. I know I am dying. I must tell something to Jasper. I must send for Cogswell. Aunt Sue," to the nurse who had assisted the physician, "go send one of the boys for Cogswell. Go at once;" as the woman hesitated, glancing at Doctor Dorne.

The physician nodded, and the nurse left the room. There was silence then, broken by sounds of sobbing

and the voice of some one repeating the words: "We humbly commend the soul of this, thy servant, our dear brother, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Saviour; most humbly beseeching thee, that it may be precious in thy sight."

The sounds came from an adjoining room. The connecting door was slightly ajar. The physician tried to close it, but found a defective latch. When he came back to the bedside his patient said:

"So my husband is dying too. Since we both must go I'm glad that he goes first."

Doctor Dorne continued his ministrations in silence. The voice finished the prayer "through the merits of Jesus Christ, thine only Son our Lord, Amen." The sobbing voice cried "Oh Papa!" and a man, as if he choked with tears said: "Come away darling." Then the solemn voice heard in the prayer was speaking again, low and hurriedly.

Aunt Sue came in wiping her eyes.

"Don't cry, Auntie," the dying woman whispered.

"Don't worry me with tears. I know you love me. I need all my strength to see to it that justice shall be done after I'm gone."

The door into the room where had been heard the sounds of prayer and weeping was slowly opened, and the woman's face lightened and darkened in the same instant.

"Tell Jasper to come with Doctor Ballantyne," she whispered.

"They's comin' honey."

"But I don't want Salome. Keep her away. Leave her with her father."

Three persons entered the room. Doctor Ballantyne, tall, pale, serious, with clergyman written unmistakably in the cast of his countenance as well as the cut of his coat. He was followed by a man, young, handsome and tall as himself who supported a slender, weeping girl on his arm.

"Jasper—Jasper," the woman exclaimed eagerly, "send Salome away."

"Oh Aunt Agnes," the young man commenced, as he led the girl towards the bed.

"Send her away, I tell you!" and she made an effort to rise.

"There, there honey," and Aunt Sue held her mistress in her arms while tears rained down her shining black face.

"Here Ceely, take care of Miss Salome," Jasper said to a young black woman who stood near the door. "Her mother doesn't want her to see how she's suffering."

"Now Doctor," began the dying woman, "you must keep me alive until I set right for Jasper a wrong that I have submitted to for twenty years. But, let me say now, if my strength fails, all I wish to tell you is written by my own hand, there in that little safe. Cogswell has a copy of it. He'll be here soon, Auntie?"

"Yes honey, Ben done gone fo' him."

"Then, my dear Mrs. Redfield, turn your thoughts to God. Why waste your strength on earthly matters?" from Doctor Ballantyne.

"No, no, wait till I tell you. I must be sure,—I must be sure. Did you say Ralph was dead?"

"Yes, he is at rest."

"Ah!" and Mrs. Redfield closed her eyes. "Such an ending! and such a life as we have passed together!"

"But now that it is past," said the clergyman.

"No, no," she interrupted. "Wait. No prayers for me now."

She lay quiet for a moment. Aunt Sue fanned her slowly, the three men sat in silence. Suddenly the dark heavy eyes opened.

"Jasper, you'll be unworthy of your name if you break your heart, or in the least mar your prospects or your purposes in life for the sake of—Salome."

"Dear Aunt Agnes,—"

"No, listen to me. I'm not raving. Ask Doctor Dorne if I'm not in condition to speak sanely. The written explanation that you'll not read until I'm dead, will be witness to all I say. You must not marry Salome."

"Aunt Agnes—no—if you forbid it. There must be some great and good reason," and Jasper Fairfax leaned forward and clasped in his own the long, slender, chilly hand of Mrs. Redfield.

"I do forbid it, for the reason that—*she is not my daughter.*"

"Aunt Agnes!" and Jasper leaned nearer, while the physician and clergyman glanced at each other pityingly as if understanding that this was the delirium of failing senses that preceded the darkness of death.

Aunt Sue nodded her turbaned head while the great tears flooded her face. "I knowed it, I knowed it," she whispered.

"No, Salome is not my child. You know how

Ralph and I came home after an absence of three years in Europe. At least you've been told. All the people about us know. We brought the little child, Salome with us and said she was our daughter. But we did not bring home Jocasta, my quadroon maid who had gone away with us. You, Doctor Dorne, and you Doctor Ballantyne know how beautiful she was? "

The two men assented silently with downcast eyes. Jasper glanced hurriedly from Mrs. Redfield to them and back again. There was wonder, horror, incredulity in his face, but evidently his two old friends believed her.

"I need not say a word about Salome's father. You know how much she resembles him, excepting her eyes. They are like Jocasta's. I never saw that wonderful coppery tinted hair, save Salome's and—her father's. She was born in a hamlet nestled far away in a nook of the Calabrian mountains. Tourists never go there. We studied maps and guide-books and wandered about for weeks before finding this spot."

"Aunt Agnes, was this child palmed off as yours with your consent? How could it have been done without?" Jasper asked.

"I did consent. Listen. Ah, there's Cogswell! the one person in the world who knows my real attitude in the matter."

The lawyer came in briskly but cautiously. He had been told of the runaway team that had dashed the carriage to pieces. He knew the driver had been killed instantly. He knew that in the next room, the communicating door now propped shut with a has-

sock, the undertaker's men were busy with the remains of Ralph Redfield. He had come prepared for a last service to Agnes Fairfax Redfield. For several years he had known that if he out-lived this life-long friend, he would be called upon for this service. He only, of all this fortunate woman's friends knew of the heart-ache she continually endured.

He seated himself after pressing her cold fingers. He laid a leathern case across his knees. Doctor Dorne moistened Mrs. Redfield's lips, saying: "Would you not better rest now and let Mr. Cogswell read your statement?"

"No, no, I must be sure, sure. Yes, Jasper, I consented by word to receive the child as heir of my body; to marry her, at a suitable age, to you, my brother's son, if I might be forever rid of her mother, Jocasta. You know why I paid this price. It was on our bridal journey that we found Jocasta and Victor, brother and sister, in New Orleans. Since then, till—now, Ralph Redfield has divided his love between Jocasta and me. This is why I speak. This is why I wrote out this shameful story, and had Mr. Cogswell copy it. My husband did not keep faith with me six months. I willingly provided for Jocasta. I left her in a pleasant little villa of her own. She and her—other children have wanted for nothing. Ralph promised me he would never see her again when we left her and carried baby Salome with us. But, he has seen her many times. He has been in continual communication with her. When we've been traveling about, Jocasta was always in the same town with us. I knew this though her name was never mentioned between us. I could not quarrel

with him, but, I determined to outwit him at last. Long ago, I resolved to put off the evil news as late as possible, but I felt that I could not allow my nephew to marry her. Now, if my husband was alive and well, and I as I am, this should be told. Death has ended the long period of deception."

"My dear Mrs. Redfield," said the clergyman, "this must have been a great cross for you."

"Ah, God alone knows how heavy my cross has been. But, I have lived up to my part of the covenant that related to the care and education of Jocasta's child. I taught her to call me mother when I could have screamed and torn my flesh at each repetition of the word that hid the shame of my husband and deepened the lie that I was living. I have kept her away at school as long as possible. In this I continually opposed the wishes of her father. He would have had her always at home. But her school days are over. Our preparations were making for introducing her into society. Ah me! how sweet it is to die instead!"

Her eyes closed wearily, there was a slight quivering of the body. Jasper felt the hand he held relax from its light clasp. The soul of Agnes Redfield had gone to its own place

CHAPTER II.

The summer light was tempered pleasantly by drawn blinds, delicate shades and handsome lace hangings. There was nothing about the house now to remind the inmates of the tragedy that had for its finish the triple funeral but the somber garments of kindred and servants and the unusual quiet that pervaded the Big House, the gardens, the quarters, and the fields where no work had been done for three days. In the fresh morning the three dead, master, mistress and black Tom had been carried to the church-yard just beyond the orchards, and sloping a little to the banks of the deep, narrow river. The gray church spire could be seen from the windows on that side of the house. The church was built by the grandfather of Jasper Fairfax in his young manhood and dedicated to the memory of the wife who died in giving birth to a son. About the plain gray walls was laid the dust of the Fairfaxes' and their servants. Here then were brought Ralph and Agnes Redfield and laid side by side with their bondman at their feet.

Now the household was gathered in the long drawing room to hear the reading of the wills. The slaves were all there. When did a Fairfax die forgetting one that called him master?

John Cogswell was there, as a matter of course. Doctor Ballantyne had been invited, as "suitable and needful under the circumstances." Jasper Fairfax, with a frozen look upon his face that no one had

ever seen there before sat with downcast eyes. Salome, pale as a lily in her black robes, felt more lonely, she thought, than even the occurrences of the last three days warranted. She felt a chill and an unaccountable reserve in the manner of all who approached her. John Cogswell, the business man of the family, with whom she had always been on terms of pleasant familiarity, spoke to her when necessary with a mingling of brusqueness and ceremony altogether new to him. Doctor Ballantyne who had trained and petted her since her babyhood, passed and repassed her now without the usual kindly word, with no least comforting touch of his hands. Even Jasper! He had always been her lover. He met her with averted gaze, and words few and formal. Why should these things be? Was this the proper behaviour in time of bereavement? There was another thing that had happened. Now that the funeral was over she had time to review it. That morning in going to the church Jasper had ridden alone, and his carriage had preceded hers. Victor and Aunt Sue rode with her. Victor's arm supported her at the graves. Even in that dreadful half hour, she felt how much comfort there would have been in the touch of Jasper's hand, in one whispered word of love. Probably it was all in accord with the etiquette of funerals. This was the first one she had ever attended. Probably it was a blunder on the part of the director. At the time she only felt lonely, and a longing for sympathy. This was the only feeling she had when, in the church she was seated with her slaves, in a pew with Victor and Aunt Sue and Ceely, while Jasper occupied the seat of chief mourner. Now that

all was quiet she found something new and strange even in the behaviour of the slaves. She would have supposed that they loved her too much to permit them to indulge in cruel curiosity about her grief. But she found herself watched by idle prying eyes. The half grown blacks leered and whispered behind their hands in her presence.

She had not been called to the dining room since death came into the house. Aunt Sue carried a tray to her room or sent Ceely with it. This she had accepted without question. Aunt Sue was getting gray and old. She knew what was proper to do.

So now, when she entered the room to hear the wills read, Victor met her, and seated her, not at the end with Jasper, Doctor Ballantyne and lawyer Cogswell, but near the middle, and, just back of her were grouped her slaves. Victor sat with one hand resting on her high-back chair.

In the midst of her vague wonderings Cogswell arose and unfolded a long sheet of paper. He was visibly nervous. His hands shook until the paper rattled. His voice was tremulous as he began reading the last will and testament of Ralph Redfield. It was not much to read, but every servant was remembered by a small gift of money, then all were commended to the kindly care of his dear daughter Salome. To her he left his medical library and all other books he possessed. Several cases of surgical instruments, cabinets of curios, some choice marbles and bronzes, a few fine jewels and all the monies of which he might die possessed.

When this was finished there was a pause, and to

those not too preoccupied to see it, the lawyer's agitation was painful.

Doctor Ballantyne, in a stage whisper admonished him, "Be brave, be brave, get through with it as quickly as you can. It's nothing,—very common."

"Yes, I know, in some of the phases the circumstances are common enough, but I can't get used to them," and he glanced furtively toward Salome.

All eyes were turned upon her, all but Jasper's. He leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair, and his head on his hand.

Salome sat with downcast eyes. Slow tears were coursing over her cheeks. She heard the lawyer's voice as in a dream. What had that long story of quadroon Jocasta to do with her? and why should her mother publish this shame after she and her unfaithful husband were forever past sinning and repenting? But, this little child named Salome! Ah! She lifted her head. The tears on her cheeks were burned dry in the crimson glow of shame. It meant that! She, Salome Redfield, was not Redfield, she was only—Salome as Jo was Jo, as Ceely was Ceely, as Aunt Sue—"Oh!" with a long drawn moan. She turned her eyes to the slaves. They met her questioning gaze with no hint of sympathy. She was one of themselves, nothing more. She looked at Jasper. He had not changed his position. His hand hid his eyes.

The reading was now of the disposition of the personal property of Agnes Fairfax Redfield. She too remembered the slaves for kindness, long servitude, honesty, and in a few instances for unusual faithfulness to trusts. Then she commended them one and

all to her beloved nephew, Jasper Fairfax, her nearest relation. Also, in accordance with her father's often expressed wish in case she died without heirs, she gave him in fee simple, her share in the lands known as Fairfax Farms. She asked him, as he loved her and in memory of their uninterrupted friendship to regard her wishes in reference to several old slaves. She wished them to be comfortably housed and cared for as long as they lived. In the last clause was the sharpest sting of all. It read: "Probably it will be well to dispose of this girl known as Salome. Her training may make her troublesome."

As this was read the girl sprang from her chair and faced the group at the end of the room. Cogswell mopped his face with his damp handkerchief. Doctor Ballantyne gazed coldly upon the girl whose growth he had watched with fond interest and quoted in his professional voice: "Servants, be obedient to your masters."

Jasper lifted his head and met Salome's blazing eyes. What will *he* say? was the swift question her heart was beating out. This man who had always been her lover, who would have been her husband so soon—ah, would he? Now he was her owner—her master. Sometimes men had loved and had given honorable marriage to their chattels; but, would he? She had used to call him Saul. He was so tall, so kingly amongst men. His clear dark eyes had always met her own so steadfastly, so admiringly.

To him she had been a stately sunflower with her velvet brown eyes and her aureola of copper-colored hair. She knew now how to account for the silken ripples of this wonderful mass of hair, for the indefin-

able charm of her complexion. She knew, true daughter of the South that she was, the cause of the creamy transparency of her cheek that Jasper had kissed and declared unequalled in all the world. But, may-hap, so had her father kissed and praised her mother. She waited for him to speak, not dreaming of the effort it cost him to do so. She half expected him to leave his place, to come and take her in his arms and claim her by the old covenant. But, without one slightest movement after meeting her eyes, he said in a low steady voice, "Perhaps you would better go to your room, Salome. I'll talk to you by and by."

This was the first order from her owner. His voice sounded hard and cold. He looked straight into her eyes. She cowered before him. It was the look, the tone of the master.

She left the room, this long, stately, beautiful room where so often she had met her father's friends, where so many times she had danced the hours away with Jasper and other men who envied him in his good fortune of lands and slaves, and coveted his future wife.

She sat down when she reached her own room. How strange everything looked! How that one sentence seemed blazoned over everything: "Dispose of this girl known as Salome." She who but three days ago had all the world at her feet, and all the world was as nothing compared with her one true lover, was now, only a chattel to be disposed of.

That pale, cold, stony-eyed woman whom she had called mother! Why, what a dual life she had lived! She had written those words, "this girl known as

Salome" years ago. At any time since her childhood the blow might have fallen. Did she wish it had come sooner? "Ah, Jasper!"

Had Mrs. Redfield acted well the lie? No. Salome told herself now that she might have suspected the truth long ago. Her father had petted and caressed her always. He never could find names for her that quite satisfied him. He praised her beauty and her sprightliness continually. She could not now remember one caress or one word of praise bestowed upon her by Mrs. Redfield. She knew of the disagreements between the husband and the wife in regard to her education. Doctor Redfield favored governesses and home training; his wife insisted on boarding schools, and had her way.

Salome sat with clenched hands and she spoke the bitterness of her thought.

"I might have known she was not my mother. No girl's mother I ever knew acted as she did. No wonder my father,—ah, he *was* my father! loved Jocasta. A fine old Greek name! My mother was beautiful too. But, what will Jasper say? Oh me! Does he love me as my father loved Jocasta? I wonder, if he had been free if he'd have made her his wife. No, he would not," she answered herself. She knew he was true to his class, true to tradition, true to the code that stamped with contumely any least taint of black blood. And yet, he would have married her to Jasper, his wife's relation. Ah, yes, there was the cropping out of the blot in his character. He had lied to his wife and gratified his passion. He would have lied to Jasper to benefit a part of himself.

"Jasper will not marry me. How will he dispose of me?"

She cowered where she sat and looked about furtively. She caught sight of herself in a mirror. She stared in wonder. How had that pale, crouching, wild-eyed creature found her way into this room? She opened her lips to speak, she lifted her hand. Then she knew she was censuring her own shadow. It was the blood of some fugitive ancestor stirring in her veins that had disguised her to her own eyes.

CHAPTER III.

Next morning a half-grown girl came to Salome with a message.

Usually Ceely had done all errands to and from Salome's room, but, since assisting, in a dilatory, impertinent fashion to dress her mistress for the funeral, she had not shown herself in the room.

This message was only, "Mas' Fai'fax wants to see yo."

"Very well Nan," Salome answered. "Send Ceely to help me dress."

The girl stared at her and grinned, but went away. In a minute she was back, still grinning.

"Aunt Sue done tole me Ceely's busy, and yo mustn't keep Mas' Fai'fax waitin'.

There could be no mistaking this. The servants must have their cue from the master. She only needed a word from him in confirmation.

Her night-long vigil had left her languid and heavy-eyed. She had tasted no morsel of food since knowing herself as only "the girl Salome." Still she was not quite spiritless. She would know from himself how her master meant to dispose of her.

She arose with blazing eyes and flushing cheeks. She shook out the heavy hair, and, all unaccustomed as she was to the task, twisted it loosely and gracefully into a coil on top of her head. She pinned it in place with a few jet pins that shone like dark eyes in the burnished coppery coils. She wrapped about her

a heavy black silken robe with never a glint nor a rustle. She had used to wear it lit up with amber or turquoise. Now the dead black was only relieved with jet.

As she passed down the broad stairs she knew she was watched by the house servants from landings, closets and half-open doors. At the foot was Victor. He stood with down-cast eyes. How kind and affectionate he had always been to her. He had known all about her, all her life. He knew where her mother was hidden away. No doubt he had been the go-between for Doctor Redfield and Jocasta all these years.

As she passed him he leaned over her and whispered hurriedly:

"Be brave, I'll stand by you."

She answered him with a glance, this uncle of hers, and her cheeks burned and there was a dragging weight at her heart as she tacitly acknowledged the relationship.

She passed into the drawing room. There sat Jasper, idly gazing out through the open window. It was a fair sight. The lawn, sloping away and melting into fields covered with pluming corn or billowy grass, and these stretching to join the woodlands that had been so carefully pruned there was not an unsightly tree within its hundreds of acres. There was no finer estate in all Kentucky than Fairfax Farms. The first owners, two English brothers had obtained it from the government before the rebellious Colonies had cut away from the Mother Country across the Sea. In the days long before there were state lines, wandering bands of Indians had camped

in peace within sight of the cabins of the tall Fairfax brothers. Hunters and trappers of all the nationalities that came flocking to the great hunting grounds found in these cabins a welcome at coming, a helping hand, a cheerful word and a full provision wallet at going.

Through strange chance, through five generations the farms had never been divided save by two.

They were not a prolific race, though always of tall stature and perfect health. Though there had been daughters they invariably died childless, and then their portion reverted to the Fairfax estate. It had never happened that cousins had married. With Old World ideas of family dignity, the oldest son had been named Jasper, always. In the little churchyard looking over the deep-walled river lay four of the name, each representing his own generation.

The Jasper Fairfax who now gazed so complacently upon his fair inheritance was a fine representative of his race. There was left in his face and physique no trace of English origin. His fair faced, blue-eyed British forefathers had wooed dark girls of the further south; girls with storm-black hair, haunting eyes, musical voices and feet trained to time the throbbing of guitars, the clatter of castanet.

Jasper Fairfax was purely American, soul and body. Tall, broad of shoulder, slender of hip, light of step, quick of motion. His clean cut features had lost English roundness, but had gained lines that a sculptor might have copied in his Greek god. His eyes were greenish hazel, his hair, black in shadow, golden bronze in sun was abundant and full of the fascination of shifting waves.

In his school and college days when boyish admirers would say to him openly:

"Fairfax, you're a devilish handsome fellow," he had no answer but to drawl indifferently: "Yes, I reckon you're right, the Fairfaxes' were good looking people to start with and they've always had the good taste to match themselves well in marriage."

Since the death of his aunt his mind had been exercised continually with the turning over and over of one thought: The change that had come to his own fortunes. Once more Fairfax Farms were undivided. If Salome had been his cousin, very soon she would have been his wife. The land would have been his, virtually, and yet there would have been frequent legal formalities to remind him of the real ownership. His aunt's chattel and personal property would have been Salome's without question. Now she had only what her father left for her. He recalled Doctor Redfield's specifications. He had mentioned his library, his curios, his surgical out-fit, his jewels and his money.

Ralph Redfield, as a boy and young man, had shown great brilliance in the study and practice of medicine. If he had not married a rich woman no doubt he would have risen to eminence in his profession. As it was, he cut down his large and increasing practice in the town of Bellaire to a few chosen families. These, for a certain annual sum he agreed to serve for a certain number of months in the year. He allowed nothing to defer his periodical hunting and fishing excursions, neither would he debar himself from social pleasures, and frequent trips east or west or north or south with his wife. He

always had his business and professional cares well in hand. There seemed to be no limit to his faculty of delegating his powers.

There was never a word from him of neglect or betrayal of trust. His long, deep blue eyes drew souls within his reach, and one touch of his graceful hands compelled their surrender and bound them to loyalty.

As Fairfax reviewed the character of his uncle-in-law, he smiled. It was no wonder that he had succeeded in making that strange compact with his wife. The two had been married five years when Salome was born. Their devotion to each other was proverbial amongst their friends. Not one least hint of the true state of affairs had ever been given. Neither was it to be wondered at that Redfield had not broken with Jocasta. Probably, when he promised his wife to do so, he meant to keep faith with her; but, would Jocasta ever consent to forget him? After holding him for years as her lover, could she find it in her heart, or in her passion-swept will to deny herself?

The smile died on the lips of Fairfax. The offspring of these lovers had nearly been foisted upon him as his wife. He was by no means certain that his aunt would have prevented it if she had not been so suddenly overtaken with tragedy and death. But, Cogswell assured him, that if in any case she had failed, he would have told the story. So now he had this problem to deal with: How dispose of the girl known as Salome? Not much of a problem, he thought, at most. His experience with the inferior race had shown him that submission and dependence were potent factors in the make-up of the majority.

Where there was but a tincture of the torrid blood, as in Salome's case, vanity, love of ease, luxury, display and approbation made up the personality. Usually, far from there being anything vicious and revengeful in mixed blood, mulattos and quadroons to the faintest taint were cowardly and cringing. Sneak thieves they might be, but not bold marauders. Slaves who had murdered their masters, or led insurrections had been the overgrown, ungainly, coal-black monsters. It was simply an excess of strength fomented by mischief-making prating of would-be reformers. He feared nothing in dealing with Salome more serious than a shower of tears and a season of coquettish sulking. No doubt she would be disappointed, but, tractable. Time would heal all this, and,—

“Good morning—Mr. Fairfax,” and the black-robed figure stopped just within the door. “I’m sorry to have kept you waiting, but—”

“Ah, Salome!”

The voice was glad and caressing. He arose and hastened to meet her. He took her hand and clasped the other arm about her shoulders.

She lifted her face, a wondering smile growing in her eyes. Their lips met as of old, and she leaned against him. All her forebodings vanished. She almost laughed aloud. In her selfish grief she had wronged him!

His thought was; “I was right. She loves me and will be as clay in my hands.”

He led her to a sofa and they sat together. He kept her in his arms. Their words were few. Little

caressing touches were more eloquent than words. She felt rested and comforted.

By and by, she told him how lonely and strange the house had grown. The servants, one and all were disrespectful. They were anxious, she supposed, to keep her in mind of her position.

"I'll see to that, darling. I'll let the whole pack know that the girl I love must be treated with the most kindly consideration. Else, something new will happen at Fairfax Farms. There'll be a sale and a few niggers will find another master."

Salome answered with head erect and brightening eyes: "No doubt dear, if they once understand that our relations are unchanged they will behave as usual."

Fairfax winced. He saw she did not in the least comprehend his purpose.

"For the present," he said, "I think I'll leave you here as sole mistress of the house, just as Aunt Agnes was."

"Oh yes, of course, while I'm in mourning."

"And, as you have many valuable things here, left you by—your father, this is entirely proper. We can make other arrangements if there should be any reason for letting this place for a time. That has been done before when there has been but one Fairfax."

"Yes," and Salome's pale cheek flushed. She waited breathlessly for him to say on.

"Then, you will live with me in the other house," and he clasped her closer and kissed her lips, her cheeks, her eyes, her throat. He even pulled away the black draperies about her bosom and pressed his

burning lips where lips had never touched before, save, possibly her mother's or her father's in her infancy.

She raised her hands to resist him, but he put them down and held them, whispering between rapid kisses: "You are mine! mine! My beautiful, warm loving Salome! Mine by love and by law!"

"Then how useless," she said laughing "was that exposure by—your aunt. She might better have left the story untold since we are to marry just the same."

She was looking into her lover's eyes. All her world was there. A change swept over his face. It darkened almost to a frown; but the cloud was gone as quickly as it had come, and he said with a close caress:

"Ah yes! we will marry—mating ourselves as the birds and flowers mate—because it is nature and love drawing us to each other. There will be no need of parson, book and bell; no place for superstitious ceremony with ring and conventional costume. We are already bound in our hearts because of the love we bear each other. The hours we will pass together will rival in ecstatic bliss those enjoyed by Antony and Cleopatra. We will rehearse the loves of Paris and Helen, or," and he smothered her with kisses "your own father and Jocasta."

"Jasper!" and she tore herself from his arms. "Is that what you mean?"

She stood erect before him. Her cheeks were crimson, her eyes were fire. He too arose. He was cool, smiling, admiring.

"Really Salome, you know we cannot live without each other, and there's no other way. You know

as well as I that a regular marriage now that your origin is known, is impossible."

She stood with dilated eyes, her bosom heavily rising and falling.

"And you will marry some one else?" she said hoarsely.

"Sometime, of course. A man in my position must marry. If Aunt Agnes had kept the secret of your birth, from Cogswell as well as from me, you and I would probably have married the sooner because of this calamity. But, it would all have been discovered sometime. Of course Victor knows?"

"Yes, I suppose so," and Salome covered her face with her hands.

"Somewhere, Jocasta is living. No doubt Victor knows where. You see it was as well that Aunt Agnes told the story."

"But, Jasper," and she lifted her head, "I am sure if our positions were reversed I would not forego my covenant with you."

"Indeed you would. You would not turn traitor to your race any more than I will." His jaws were set squarely, and he threw his hands behind him. His head was lifted, his eyes were clear. He looked not at all the same man who, a moment before had been swayed by passion, insane with desire for the beautiful woman that the law had made his chattel. Now he might have stood for the embodiment of any great principle for which heroes have died.

Salome, watching him, noted the rapid transformation. Now he was her king of men. Her thought was: He is a grand man! How proud would I be to stand by his side, his equal, his wife. His face is

darker than mine, but, the purity of his blood is as evident as is the taint in mine. But, as an unlawful lover, no.

She felt, without understanding, that there had never been anything tragic in romance, history or human possibilities, that might not come into their lives if they once entered upon this relation with each other.

"No, Salome," he continued, "you would not, in my position, stand by our old covenant. Even if Aunt Agnes had kept the secret; if Victor had not known; if Jocasta had died at your birth; yet, the truth would sometime have shown itself.

"I cannot afford to take the chance of giving to my children, the heirs of this beautiful Fairfax estate, the bearers of an old and honorable name, the consequences of a broken law. Your father educated you thoroughly. You know what these consequences might be. Why, I half believe, that Uncle Redfield's long talks on these matters were meant to prepare you and me for developments that might come after he should be as he is now, beyond question and beyond reproach."

Salome stood with downcast eyes, her hands clasped before her, all her brilliant color gone. There was something hopeless, helpless, and weary in her attitude. She might have been a Christian martyr waiting for the sacrifice.

Fairfax stepped to her side. He clasped her folded hands in one of his own and drew her close. He felt her shiver as she passively leaned against him. He scanned her face closely. Was it a sensation of repulsion, or passion? She gave no sign.

"No Salome, we cannot marry, in the usual acceptance of the word; but, we need not separate. We can be the truest of lovers, the warmest of friends. No other woman can ever take the place you fill in my heart. No other woman will ever be cared for so tenderly as I shall care for you."

She lifted her eyes to his face, her breath was chill as it passed his lips. He started and released her from his clasp. For an instant he felt as remorseful as if he had struck a dagger through her heart. With all his soul he pitied her, but there was no least shadow of a thought of relenting. She asked of him an utter impossibility. She asked for bread and he offered her all he possessed—an apple of Sodom.

"This is very kind of you, very considerate." She spoke in a hard, even tone. "I thank you. I fully realize my position, and—yours. Where many—masters would have commanded, you have condescended to plead; to play the lover. As I have often said, you are a king amongst men. You grace every position you find yourself in. Can you add to your kindness by allowing me a short time to adjust myself to the new conditions? I'll try to be reasonable."

"Salome, you are a two-edged sword," he answered bitterly. "The new conditions are hard for me as well as for you. Don't you believe it? as she smiled scornfully. "I might send you away, or allow you to go where you please; but what awaits you. Your story will travel faster than you can. Would you prefer taking the position I offer you with some new lover. What man, knowing what I know would marry you? If you were a plain woman

it would be different in many ways. Then believe me, I love you Salome, I love you."

"I believe you."

"And listen: You ask for time. You shall have it. Take your own time. Be at liberty to go and come as usual. I'll give orders to Victor; he will train the others. They need not know but that we are to marry. Then, Salome when you see fit to receive me, let me know. Good-bye." He lifted her hands, kissed them and was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

Jasper Fairfax was experiencing an entirely new, and a not quite pleasant sensation as he left this house that was now his own. The thought came to him that probably Salome would offer him a price for her liberty. He had no idea of the amount of money her father had accumulated. It was mentioned indefinitely in his will. She was a well educated girl, amply capable of earning a livelihood. But, even if he could gain his own consent to let her go, and if her father's bequest should prove but small for her extravagant tastes and habits, would she work? Would she not drift, sooner or later into the very way of life that he proposed? By and by, if he should marry, and he *must* marry, then, if she wished it, he would free her.

He sauntered slowly up the long avenue of beeches that led from one house to the other. When he gained his own home, he walked the length of the protecting verandas many times, feasting his eyes on his possessions. It was truly a magnificent estate. It had come to him through no effort of his own. The hands that planted the trees or trained those left of the "forest primeval" were long ago dust. The two great stone houses with their thick walls, picturesque towers, spacious rooms, broad stairways and general air of opulence had sheltered four generations of his name.

Heretofore, when reviewing his situation in life,

he had the acumen to see that he was peculiarly fortunate. His face and person, were by nature and culture, far beyond the average.

His patrimony, considered financially, even without the share of Fairfax Farms owned by Mrs. Redfield was equal to a dukedom.

His mind was clear and active, his health was perfect.

More than all, fate, and his nearest kindred had provided the loveliest woman the sun ever shone upon for his wife. Now this last was changed. He was so accustomed to waving away difficulties it was hard for him to acknowledge that the terms he proposed to Salome, and her manner of receiving them troubled him. Prompt action was his nature and his habit. Nothing that came to his hand was much "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." He too would have cut through at once the Gordian knot. If the cord was ruined, so much the better for the industry of cord making.

And yet, how vain it was that he told himself, that liberty for Salome meant only ruin with no palliating features. He was not comforted by assuring himself that, loving each other as they did, the clouds would soon disperse and they would be supremely happy together,—at least for a while.

This while would last until he should marry. Then he would do anything for Salome that she wished, if they found it desirable or necessary for them to separate. On the heels of this conclusion came a vision to his mind of a fair tall girl. Her violet eyes were like deep wells, and from their depths looked up the purest of all that was left to the bankrupts of

Eden, a womanly soul. Unconsciously Fairfax lifted his head. His whole personality put on a nobler guise.

"Ah, if I may win her! But, she reads men like a page of long primer. She'll look into my soul, and see there— Salome. Ah, Adelaide! pure as a star and I fear, quite as far above me!"

Then came a muttered curse on his Uncle-in-law who had baited this trap for him. Not content with the gratification of his own lawless passion, he must look ahead and strive to foist upon another man his illegitimate, mongrel offspring.

He was still busy with these thoughts in the evening as he sat on the veranda that faced toward the other house. In the quiet, the muffled murmur of the river, stealing along between its high walls could be heard below the nearer sounds of the house servants rattling the glass and silver of the dinner service, and the field hands in the quarters. The whole house was open to the evening breeze. A whippoor-will in one of the trees near the house began its melancholy cadence and was answered by another from towards the river. As Fairfax pondered; still the faces of two women floated through his brain. The one, warm, lustrous, passionate, with brown eyes and a cloud of slumbrous flame about her shoulders.

The other, fair as snow, with only the odor of white roses in her golden brown hair, and her pansy eyes looking through and beyond him. Cleopatra and Galatea. Would the beautiful marble warm into life and step down from her pedestal at his bidding? "Oh my sins!" he sighed. "Shall I add to them?"

He was walking up and down the veranda that sheltered three sides of the house.

A solitary voice arose in the quarters, singing a quaint melody, suitable, it was supposed for the time. It was weird, solemn, with that unmistakable Afro-American abandon:

“Oh de day is done, de night comes down,
Come Jesus, carry me!
My po’ feet’s weary an’ I caint run,
Come Jesus, carry me,”

“Oh my Jesus! Oh my Jesus!
Come fo’ to carry me home.”

At the second verse, a second voice from the Red-field quarters took up the melody and the two soloists blended like one voice and a simultaneous echo:

“Take me home across the flood,
Come Jesus carry me!
Make me white wid dy own blood
Come Jesus carry me!”

Then the two companies of slaves joined in the chorus. This song, and it was a long one, was followed by another and another. The night grew quieter, the murmur of the river was louder, the whistling of the whip-poor-wills sharper. Nesting birds in the trees stirred and chirped as if in gentle protest against their noisy neighbors.

The moon, almost a perfect circle was showing itself above the trees, and casting heavy shadows.

Fairfax wondered how much longer the concert would last. Accustomed as he was to the singing of the slaves through the summer evenings, he felt this night, how lonely he would be without it. Nowhere in all the world could there be just such a concert under just such circumstances, excepting in the states of America where Afro-Americans were the chattel property of the whites. Was there anything visible in these conditions denoting discontent? Reformers, agitators, fanatics were busy. What could they do? What would the next year or two bring forth?

The musings of this man who was called master by over two hundred blacks were straying away from his personal affairs. True he was conscious of an undercurrent of troubled thought, in the measure that he continually heard the babble of the river. He was still wavering, and he was losing patience with himself. Still pitted against each other, were Cleopatra and Galatea.

But, the case was nearing a decision. In the pure cold light of the moon, Galatea on her pedestal, marble though she be, is more than all other women.

This passion for Salome was habit and contact. When had he not worshipped Adelaide Francis? Worship was the word. He had never given one thought of marriage to any other than Salome. But now the senses were in abeyance to the soul. He knew that in his feeling for Salome was no element that might not be evoked by any other beautiful girl.

He threw the stub of his cigar on the lawn and it

glowed there, deadening the young grass like an evil deed in a fresh life.

He raised his eyes, he touched his fingers to his lips, and waved his hand towards the Redfield house:

"Sleep well, Salome. To morrow you shall be free; but if allowed, I will guard you as any brother might a beautiful, unfortunate sister."

As he gazed, he was sure he saw in the misty light a puff of smoke rise above the roof of the house. He smiled. Probably Salome was burning old letters; or it was mist, or imagination?

He threw back his shoulders and breathed deeply as of one relieved of a burden. He dropped himself into a hammock and listened to the new song that was begun by the Redfield slaves.

"Oh de jedgement, de jedgement,
De cha'yot's in de sky,
De sun's put out and de moon's fell down,
We's gwine home bime-by."

With a mighty burst came the chorus from two hundred throats:

"Oh glory! oh glory!
De jedgement cha'yot's in de sky,
We's gwine home bime-by."

The soloist was beginning the second verse, when Fairfax sprang to his feet. It was not imagination now, it was not mist. It was unmistakable smoke,—black smoke, such as never rose from the burning of a girl's love letters! It rolled straight and black

above the trees about the house. What could it mean? Save the lamps and candles there had been no fire in the Big House for weeks.

He stepped to the hall and called "Prax!"

"Yes, Mas' Jaspa," came from the dusk, "Dey's a light in yo' room."

"I don't want a light,—run to Simmons' house and call him. Tell him to come quickly. Call the quarters as you go by.— Tell the men to run to Miss Agnes' house with all the buckets and ladders."

"Yes Mas, Jaspa," and the slender young fellow was up and away. But, before the sound of his hurrying feet had died, there was a roar as of sudden thunder, followed by a muffled echo like the fall of an avalanche, and black smoke rose in a great dense cloud from amongst the trees, and lay a blot on the beautiful night.

Then were heard screams and groans and prayerful exclamations instead of the solemnly joyful songs.

Fairfax was horrified. Were they only frightened, or were they injured and dying? And where was Salome?

"Oh God!" he groaned, "who has done this?" It was hardly possible that the slaves, other than the house servants, were away from the quarters. Often they were all there. Victor, Aunt Sue and Ceely always slept in the house.

Fairfax's thoughts ran rapidly. It must have been an accident. Doctor Redfield had usually kept a stock of ammunition in his strong room in the basement of the house. No doubt some crafty, pilfering creature, fancying that there was money secreted there had searched for it, not knowing of the powder.

A lighted candle or a match had been dropped. He had concluded thus far as he hurried down the avenue, hatless, coatless, shouting orders to the chattering blacks, and his half-dressed overseer. Simmons too had seen the smoke before Prax called him, and was starting, half prepared for bed as he was, to investigate.

The scene was bedlam out-done. Every outside door was blown from its hinges, the windows were shattered, the roof had fallen in, and the whole inside of the house was a mass of flames and smoke. The heat for yards about the walls was intense. Ladders and buckets were of no use. The blacks stood about shrieking, or knelt and prayed, or lay prone upon the ground in the dumb agony of fright.

Fairfax ascertained at once who had been in the house. The quarters were too far away to be injured, and, as it frequently happened, the house servants were all there, "Ceptin Victor," said big Tim.

"And Salome! where's Salome?" Fairfax asked fiercely as he shook the giant slave by the shoulder.

"Miss Salome? Oh, fo' God, Mas Jaspa, I don' know. Ceely done come down an' say Miss Salome didn't want huh, an' dah she stayed. I haint seen Miss Salome."

"Where's Ceely now? he asked. "Find her! Why did she leave her mistress alone in the house?"

But Ceely, when haled before her master by Tim had only to say that Salome had dismissed her immediately after dinner. That she was fully dressed, though she said she was weary and sleepy. She had brushed her hair, and braided it as usual for the night, and then Miss Salome said she would write a

letter. Ceely had gone down stairs and passed Victor where he sat in an arm chair in the hall. She had asked him to go out with her, and he answered surlily that he "reckoned somebody better stay in the house with Miss Salome."

She went out and ran down to the quarters. There was nothing unusual in this. Fairfax, knew that the slaves, scared by their superstitious fears avoided as much as possible, a house where death had been.

While the fire raged and the slaves and their owner gradually drew further and further from the intense heat, one question was formulated in the minds of Fairfax and the overseers of the two establishments.

Surrounded by the wild-eyed negroes of all ages from the blinking pickaninny to the tottering octogenarian, Fairfax and Simmons and Roberts called each by name, and each black man and woman called their children together till every one was accounted for. But, where were Victor and Salome.

In this huddled crowd, there was not one who would have been brave enough to enter the basement of the house alone after nightfall.

Fairfax spoke his thought:

"It must have been Victor;" and there was a groan and a great rolling of eyes. The master recalled the figure of the tall, sedate, handsome, reticent quad-room, who had been for so many years Doctor Redfield's trusted personal attendant. He it must have been, and yet, Victor knew better than his master what the strong room contained. He was not the man to meet with an accident of this overwhelming kind. If he designed it, he might, inadvertently sacrifice himself, but he would place Salome in safety.

If he designed it, had he had time to escape? On this thought Fairfax ordered a thorough search of the grounds. If Victor had not escaped, perhaps Salome might be in hiding somewhere frightened out of her senses by the evil that had befallen her home. Victor might have deceived her, and persuaded her out of the house on some trivial pretext.

Every nook of the gardens and orchards and lawns was peered into. Voices called all up and down, in every key, "Salome, Salome," but there was no answer.

Fairfax threw himself into a garden chair and called Ceely.

"What did Miss Salome do to-day after I left her?"

"After lunch," the girl answered "she went to Bellaiah. She done come back 'bout five o'clock."

"Did you go with her?"

"No Victo' went. They had the pony phaeton."

There was nothing to be done. The flames were smoldering within the gaunt bare walls, the upper floors had fallen, and a bed of embers lay on the first floor which had had a lining of stone and cement.

The mothers of sleepy, complaining children trailed off to their cabins, and the overseers ordered the men away to their beds. The house servants were put into the care of Mammy Sheba, the Fairfax house-keeper. When they were all gone, Fairfax urged his overseers to go to their homes.

"I'll wait," he said. "Victor or Salome may be somewhere near. You know in the present complication of affairs they may be afraid to show themselves. I cannot believe that they perished. It's too horrible!"

He was left alone, and he wandered round and round the smouldering ruin. The moon went down and the stars turned white in the gray of dawn and still he remained.

He had searched over every foot of the grounds for rods. He had walked the length and breadth of the gardens and the orchards many times. He had wandered as far as the river, and up and down along its precipitous wall he had called "Salome! Salome."

The sun arose but he could not tear himself from the spot. Oh that those sulking embers would cool so that he might have the debris raked and sifted, and make assurance doubly sure by the finding of some jewel Salome had worn, or even some ghastly unconsumed shred of her body. Lacking these she must have escaped. If she were only alive, some time, some where he would find her.

There in the morning light stood the bare stone walls, the towering chimnies, all that was left of the home with its treasures of art gathered from all parts of the world. Family and home erased from existence within four days. The fire had so far burned itself out, that Fairfax could stand near the openings in the walls, and look within. Most of the partition walls were of stone or brick.

"Ah me!" he sighed. "Those ancestors of mine built well. They built for all time, but they reckoned without taking account of the alien element. I'm sure Victor did this. He may have determined to avenge his sister, and—his—niece;" and there alone in the fair morning such a glow dyed the face of the last Fairfax as had not been called up by the fierce flames of the night.

But, his thought ran on:

“No doubt if Aunt Agnes had kept silence all would have been well. Victor would never, by the quiver of an eyelash, have betrayed, even to Salome, their relationship. What a plan Ralph Redfield laid! He loved this old place, he was proud to live here. He felt, no doubt that in the grave he would like to have a lasting claim upon it. So, he acknowledged this tainted daughter, and kept the thumb-screws on his wife for twenty years. I'm glad to feel sure that no Fairfax would have done this thing. But, Oh Salome! Will the loss of you in the relation I had determined upon, and a life of bitter memory and repentance expiate the sin I proposed against you? Who can tell?”

CHAPTER V.

The sun that arose so fairly shone but a little while. By eight o'clock rain was falling in torrents.

"So much the sooner will the walls and the debris be cooled," Fairfax said to his overseers.

Even while it was raining he had himself driven to Bellair. He made inquiries and found that Salome and Victor had been seen on the previous afternoon by many acquaintances. They had made a few purchases, trifling matters, gloves, or hosiery or handkerchiefs, going about in a quiet, leisurely manner, and constantly together. Salome's true history was known, and for that reason persons seeing her remembered.

Of Doctor Redfield's banker, Fairfax learned something that surprised him. The doctor had accumulated a sum of money, that, considering his sources of income and his manner of living seemed fabulous. This money he had deposited, simply for safety, and to be delivered when called for, in the name of his daughter Salome. The president of the bank said further that he had repeatedly suggested ways of investing his money, and pointed out business opportunities to the doctor. This neighborly advice was always put aside. His usual answer was: "No, life and speculation are uncertain. I want my girl to be entirely free to do as she pleases." He talked a great deal about the unsettled state of political matters, saying there were no means of knowing what

might happen; that the South was being crowded to the wall; that the North was jealous; and in case of serious difficulty the border states would be the battle-grounds. So, his girl should have nothing to do, but fill her apron with dollars and fly to safety.

Himself he never considered. He was always providing for Salome.

"Yesterday," Mr. Tottenham concluded, "Miss Salome came, and as her father had said, took her dollars in her apron, and went away."

"Did she take coin?"

"No, paper. According to Doctor Redfield's instructions, I always changed his deposits into large bills and kept them in packages, ready for delivery at the shortest notice. Yesterday the notice came and Miss Salome's fortune was carried away by Victor in a parcel that might have passed for a purchase at a dry-goods house. If the two perished in the house last night, of course," and Tottenham lifted his eyebrows and turned his empty hands outward.

"Unless Victor placed it in the safe. Uncle Redfield had one, warranted fire-proof, in his strong room where he kept uncut jewels and other valuables. My Aunt had in her possession many old time pieces of jewelry that always followed the Farms. These were kept in the safe. I think now that the two were placing the money there, or they were removing the valuables preparatory to flight, when the powder was fired. Or it might be that some professional thief had tracked them from the bank."

"Will you try to trace the matter through the detective service?"

"Oh no. I'll have the ruins searched for evidence

that they perished there. I shall be glad if none is found."

"But your family property?"

Fairfax shook his head: "The poor girl has been sufficiently humiliated. If she is still alive, I hope she may make good her purpose whatever it may be."

The rain ceased, the clouds rolled away, and no thread of smoke arose from the ashes of the ruined house. A force of men was selected, and Fairfax went himself to manage the search. Doctors Dorne, father and son, were there and stood with him amongst the scorched trees. The wood of the old house had been so well seasoned that there was nothing left of it but ashes. Masses of burned plaster lay in heaps, mingled with what looked like ropes of metal twisted into fantastic shapes. These were the remains of copper, brass and silver frames of pictures. A few pieces of bronze and marble were found unbroken.

The men were all at work over the place where had been the strong room. Here the ruin was most complete; this corner receiving the first strength of the explosion. From this corner had led a spiral iron stairway directly to Doctor Redfield's rooms on the upper floor. The stairway, bent and twisted, still clung to its supports. It wound down the wall of bare stone and lost itself in the debris below the first floor. Here the men plied pick and shovel. Baskets were piled with rubbish, lifted to the lawn, and there carefully spread out and examined by some of the women. Frequently Fairfax admonished the men: "Be careful. Drag your picks. Don't strike so

deeply." He shivered and winced at each careless stroke.

His thoughts were bitter indeed, but, as the afternoon waned and nothing was found he grew hopeful. "Salome must have escaped," he said to Doctor Henry Dorne, his life-long friend. "And if she's alive, a thousand worlds will not hide her from me."

Young Dorne shook his head, and his father went and watched the women at their task.

Just then, one of the slaves, big Tim, with a yell staggered backward, dropped his pick, and fell sprawling. There at his feet lay a grinning white skull.

"Oh God!" Fairfax groaned, pressing his hands over his eyes. Dorne took up the ghastly thing, and Fairfax seizing the pick that the negro had dropped, worked amongst the slaves with trembling hands and dilated eyes. His labors were rewarded. Another skull, white as chalk, crumbling in places, rolled to his feet. It was smaller than the first. He staggered and would have fallen had he not been supported by big Tim who had recovered from his fright, and now stood valiently by his master. Only for a moment he faltered, then rallying, he ordered the men as before. In a few minutes more two complete human skeletons were found. They were carried to the lawn, and Fairfax directed the men to uncover the safe. The rubbish was soon cleared away now. No care need be taken. The safe was found, and the ammunition boxes, all open, all empty.

"There's nothing more to be done, boys," Fairfax said and he climbed the stone stairway from the base-

ment and stood on the trampled grass beside the poor remains of humanity.

An old frosty-headed Auntie watched him: "Laws don' he look lak 'is pa? an' nigh on to as old too."

He had but one thought: Salome was dead. Bright, impetuous, beautiful Salome! When he left her yesterday he had revelled in dreams of the time and place of their next meeting. He had told her he would wait for her to send for him. He had allowed his fancy to run wild with picturing the way she would look; how the rose color would come and go in her cheek; how her dark veined eyelids would rise and fall as she half invited, half repelled him. Now, there she lay. There, the fulfillment of his dreams. Oh Salome! Salome! Why had not some shadowy premonition crossed his brain? Why had he not, on the rising of his higher nature, flown on the wings of the wind and called to her, even then plotting this vast calamity. "Salome, you are free! You are pure. sinless; remain so!" For one stifling moment he felt that life, with this suffocating cloud of remorse was insupportable.

CHAPTER VI.

As the two Doctors Dorne took leave of Fairfax, he felt that the world was swept clean of all that had any claim upon him. He walked up the beech path feeling as if wandering through a desert land. There was nothing left for his eyes to rest upon, for his heart to cling to. Far away, and ever receding was a vision of Adelaide Francis. Had his first purpose in regard to Salome been consummated, he might even then have gone to her and won her for his wife. She might have condoned the sin. Other women had pardoned more in other men. But, now, with this mark of Cain upon him—?

His capability of suffering was satiated. A great numbness fell upon him. That night he slept the dead, heavy sleep of utter exhaustion.

Late in the afternoon next day he came from his room. Mammy Sheba hovered about him as if she would like to take him in her arms and soothe him as she used to when he was a child. Her voice trembled and there were tears in her eyes.

Fairfax understood her, and as she came and placed his coffee on the table he clasped her hand:

“It’s a bad time, Mammy, isn’t it?”

“Oh Mas’ Jaspa!” and the other black hand was laid on his head.

“But, neva min’ Honey, de good Lawd he knows w’at’s bes fo youens. He’s done cl’a’d every ting

away now. He's got some so't o' wo'k fo' yo. You'll see Honey."

"I don't believe I feel much like work, Mammy; I've no one to work for."

"Now don' say dat Honey, who's gwine fo' to look afta all dese people yo' got hyah? Whah is dey any mo Fai'fax but yo, ceptin dese brack ones? Wasn't we all done bawn hyah? Don' say youse nobody to wo'k fo."

"You're right Mammy, there's work to be done for your race. God alone knows how much and how serious it will be.—What's that?"

A sound of wailing and funereal singing came in through the windows that opened toward the Red-field place.

"Dat's de fun'al. Mas Simmons done let all of 'em go. I wouldn't let 'em distu'b yo' to talk 'bout it."

"That's right,—it's all right. Poor Salome!" He dawdled over the dainty meal his old nurse had prepared for him because it would have grieved her to leave it untouched. He drank his coffee, and as the faithful, loving old woman hovered round and "honeeyed" him he really felt, at least, not quite forsaken.

By and by, he sauntered out through the hall on his way to the veranda. He picked up a parcel of mail as he went, but for some time he leaned idle in his chair, smoking and listening to that wailing of hymns. Then, he knew by the sounds that the services were over. Watching that way he saw a concourse emerge from the grove, pass into the high way, and slowly wend its way to the burial ground.

He could see, distinctly, the two caskets, carried by stalwart blacks.

"Ah Salome! Salome!" he sighed, and the pain at his heart was stifling. But it's all over," he was speaking, there alone. "Mam Sheba is right. There's work for me somewhere, and, I must do it."

His work was nearer than he would have guessed. Amongst his letters was one from the district central committee of his political party, asking him to be present at their next meeting. They were in the midst of arranging for the presidential campaign. The work had been neglected, because of factions in the party. What they wanted of him was that he should speak for the party all during the summer and fall until the very eve of the election. The writer added: "You know the state of the country. Trouble is brewing, men's hearts are failing. We want in our service men of undoubted loyalty to the South. We want men of large interests, men of ability, to go into the field and speak for us. Can you refuse?"

Fairfax dropped the letter impatiently. What had he to do with politics and scheming? And yet, if men who were in the midst of it all felt there was serious trouble near, was it right for him to shirk? The attitude of Northern politicians toward the South could not be mistaken; but, what could the North do? Send fanatics and breed insurrections in the South, truly. Cramp and curtail the rights of Southerners in regard to going about with their chattel property, and settling in the territories with these chattels. That was done already. Doctor Redfield had been preparing for trouble; but, his expressions were ambiguous. In the light of Mrs.

Redfield's revelations, he may have feared trouble for Salome only. Had he been entirely wise even in preparing for her?

This political wire-pulling he most thoroughly despised. The ranting of thread-bare fanatics had been going on ever since—Massachusetts loosed her tenacious hold on her own slaves. But, were the wire-pullers and fanatics going to accomplish serious mischief at last? If they were, then, was it a merit in him to stand aloof and declare with lofty scorn, "We never mix in politics," the "*We*" meaning not only all the living and dead Fairfaxes, but all the class to which they belonged. Politics meant wrangling, managing, working on men's weaknesses, stooping to slander, dragging to light all the guarded secrets of one's life. In short, going into politics was to stand in a moral pillory, the target for the gibes of enemies, and even the laughter and half believing tolerance of friends. On his plane of life that was what going into politics meant. And yet, it must mean something else below all this froth and foam. The progress made on the untouched shores of the new world in the time they were divided amongst warring European powers, was not to be compared with the growth of the Republic. What had made this growth possible and permanent? Surely there must have been wisdom in the heads and goodness in the hearts of some of the men who directed the affairs of the government. Whatever of trickery there had been, whatever of evil motive, whatever of jealousy, envy, hatred and malice, still, the young republic had prospered. Now there were fears of trouble. This was the expression of conservatives. Amongst

radicals there were outspoken threatenings of disunion, of war. These were political matters, albeit the harmful part of the work might be the harvest of seeds sown by wire-pullers and demagogues. How could they be headed off? How were plans to be frustrated?

Fairfax picked up the letter and read again: "Trouble is brewing; men's hearts are failing. We want in our service men of undoubted loyalty to the South. We want men of large interests, men of ability, to go into the field and speak for us. Can you refuse?"

Was this the work that Mammy was so sure the "good Lawd" had for him to do? It had presented itself in the right time to get a hearing, at least. He felt that he must have action, and something to fill his time, something on which to put forth all his strength of mind and body. What could he do? There was nothing in travel that could drive away this fearful ennui. There was nothing to regret in going away, nothing to come home to. Nothing but his black people. No one for whom he cared more than for Mammy Sheba. And, it was for his, and other Southern men's black people for whom the ferment was going on, for whom the cloud, no larger than a man's hand, lay on the horizon. When the storm burst over the heads of these dependent children of nature, what would be the consequences to them? Since he had nothing else to do, he would work for Mammy and the rest.

On the dim border land of his thoughts there wavered the vision of a beautiful girl, but, as he walked up and down in the twilight he said under his

breath; "Vain dream: Never for me will Galatea wake to life."

The letter was answered in the spirit in which it was written. Within a few days Fairfax had communicated with the party leaders and set himself to work with a zeal that surprised all who knew him. It was the stormy campaign of 1860. It was the time of bringing forth of that monster, Civil War. It had been a long time in coming. Men could not believe the evil was upon them. It was treated as a joke. It was too horrible to believe, so it was ridiculed.

Fairfax came into the questions of the time with a free mind. He had been no dabbler. He had lived a leisurely, studious, observant life. In his addresses to the people he gave them his reasons for speaking to them in cool, clear, convincing arguments. He was not currying favor with any party. He was not truckling for place. He believed himself right. He was loyal to his convictions. His earnestness made a place for him in the hearts of the people. Great things were predicted for him. But, the campaign is history. In November the air was murky with events that were looming black in the near future. Mothers of tall sons had evil dreams, and brides, with eyes made prophetic by love saw their orange wreaths sprinkled with red, their veils made of crape.

Fairfax remained at home for a month or more. His work of the last season had cleared his mental vision in regard to Salome. He no longer blamed himself unstintedly. He did not believe she had gone to death deliberately. She and Victor were planning mischief against him when death overtook

them. The mischief they had accomplished. He had so far outgrown his horror and remorse that, as the political sky grew darker, the thought of Adelaide Francis was more continually with him. He resolved to go to her, tell her the whole story and abide by her judgment. Independent of this matter she might prove indifferent to him. If so, the world was full of fair women. After Adelaide they were all alike. He resolved further, that Fairfax Farms should have a mistress. He had no blood relation nearer than some far removed cousins in England.

In January he went to Washington, ostensibly to watch the trend of affairs in Congress; really because Senator Francis and his daughter were there. So, while the Capitol was gay and splendid, while lovers were sueing, while the dance was going on there came the hand writing on the wall and still no one believed. In December when South Carolina issued an ordinance of secession, it was made the subject of corner grocery wit, of newspaper jokes. In January when there came the rupture in the Senate it was stigmatized a fine piece of acting. Other states of the South followed their leader,—South Carolina, and the Confederacy was formed.

In the midst of these days so full of evil omens, Simmons summoned the Fairfax slaves on the lawn one morning, to hear read a letter from the master. Mam Sheba he called to stand beside him on the steps. To her especially was the message sent. She was to go to work at once and put the whole house in the very best of order. Spare nothing. She knew, if anybody did, what was necessary to be done when a beautiful young mistress was coming to the place.

She would remember Miss Adelaide whom she had admired so much a year or two ago when she had visited Salome.

The marriage was to take place very soon, but they would not be home until the Spring. Probably if political matters grew quieter they would cross the water, or go south by steamer and come up the Mississippi, reaching home by the first of May when the farms would be at their freshest and loveliest. There were great rejoicings. A house without a mistress was not to the taste of the merry-hearted negroes. Necessarily there could be but little gaiety in a bachelor establishment. Sheba was in her happiest frame of mind. Everyone about the farms was in her service. Many long consultations were held with Simmons and Roberts and their wives. Even Mr. Cogswell, as "Mas' Jaspa's" man of business had to drive to the house several times, accompanied by his wife, to decide matters of tints in walls and draperies. Miss Adelaide had pansy eyes; everything was worked out from that basis. Merrily the work went on. In the midst of it, Simmons again assembled the rejoicing blacks, and read to them from a Washington paper, a full account of the wedding of Adelaide, only daughter of Senator Archibald Francis of Lexington, Kentucky, and Jasper Fairfax of Fairfax Farms, same state. What did it matter now, all those idle rumors of war? How foolish for people to quarrel, as some people were doing! The clouds were blowing away. The state, divided by factions, torn by quarrels within its own lines, would soon settle down in peace. This was what the quiet farming folk over the north and the border states

were saying when there came the shot heard round the world, and Fort Sumter changed masters. Then, one rainy evening, while men "Crowded the road to death as to a festival," Jasper Fairfax came home, unheralded and alone. Simmons had happened to be in Bellaire, had happened to be near the station when the train came in. Then he had happened to see his employer and Prax as they were about stepping into a hired carriage. So it had happened that he brought them and their baggage through the streets where everybody wondered to see the gallant bridegroom with only his man, and all the way home to the beautiful waiting house.

The slaves were utterly speechless. Even Mammy, seeing in her young master's face unmistakable signs of trouble, held his hand in silence, her big dark eyes brimming with tears.

"It was all a mistake, Mammy, I have no wife."

"But Mas' Jaspa, honey, wasn't youens married fo' sho?"

"Yes, Mammy, we were married. We thought it was the happiest day of our lives, but, it was all a mistake. If you and I can't have a Missus who will stand by us, we won't have any. I'm afraid you and I are going to be rebels. Miss Adelaide will stand by the Government."

"Laws honey, she'd had mo' sense ef she'd stood by youens. Dat's no way fo' a man's wife to be behavin'."

Next morning Fairfax asked Simmons to assemble the blacks on the lawn. He told them as much as they could understand of the situation of the country. He told them what was meant by the taking of Fort

Sumter. He told them that he would stand by his people and that he was going into the field for his rights. He asked them to stand by him if they loved him, to keep his home in readiness for him to come to, living or dead. With solemn faces they all promised. What would they not promise for this man who stood to them for all that was great and good and kind. He was their providence, their owner by divine right. They could not understand the cause of all the changes that he feared were coming to the country, but their affectionate, clinging natures could understand that the master had been sorely troubled, and that he was going away.

CHAPTER VII.

In this beautiful region of low hills and wide valleys, broken into farms, with its narrow river singing between its steep banks, the war going on seemed unreal. Simmons and Roberts read the war news and translated to the slaves so they might know what their Mas' Fai'fax was doing. The work of the farms went on as it had been used to in other absences of the master. Simmons was a middle-aged man. His first position of overseer was with the father of the present owner of Fairfax Farms. Roberts was his son-in-law. One new phase in life on the farms was the plays of the children. They were all soldiers now. If they were set to weeding the gardens the work was done so thoroughly that Mammy had no complaints. Every weed was a Yank, and it was Mas' Fai'fax who demolished it.

One other new element had come into the sing-song life of the slaves.

It was the constant fear of the ghosts that hovered about the lonely walls of the Redfield place. If by chance any of them had to pass that way after night-fall, there were stories told with staring eyes, and shaky voice of one, two, and sometimes four or five flitting forms in white, seen through the windows or doors. Sometimes they walked mournfully about as if searching for something; sometimes they sat in groups about the wide fireplaces.

It was useless for the two white men and their

wives to talk against this superstition, and, in justice it may be said, the whites made as few errands in the neighborhood of the ruin in the night time as they could without inconveniencing themselves. The women said "it was the talk of the niggers that made them scarey." The men said nothing at all. They quietly kept away from the place excepting in broad daylight.

As the anniversaries of the two calamities approached, in July, there were fearful whisperings in the quarters. Something most horrible would be sure to take place. Mothers warned their children to keep close by the cabin doors and be good; but, the very day before the anniversary of the runaway team and the death of Doctor and Mrs. Redfield and Tom, there came the appalling news of the defeat of the Confederates at Blackburn's Ford. Then there was weeping and wailing and expectations that the "Lincum Sojers" would come and sweep everything before them as did the locusts in Egypt. Ghosts were forgotten in the face of this more tangible evil. But, the luxury of a first-class horror was not to be dispensed with for a trifle. The sun rose and set, and rose and set. No "blue-coated hirelings" were to be seen.

The dates of the burning of the house and the finding of the remains of Victor and Salome were at hand. Would Salome come and wander about the ruins and weep for her faithless lover and her lost jewels? These jewels she was known to have possessed, and yet, not one indestructible gem had ever been found. Fairfax had discouraged the search for them. The slaves were too fearful to venture on the quest, and

they knew too little of their value to care. It was the overseers and their wives who remembered the magnificence of the family jewels, as well as of those possessed by Salome, who deplored the loss of so much wealth. It was this quartette, that, on Sundays and circus days, when the slaves were all away, went on a "still hunt" for the ornaments that would have made them rich. The money, they acknowledged with many a sigh was irretrievably lost, but the diamonds—oh the diamonds! The search was quite fruitless. Not one least gem ever gleamed up from the dust and ashes to gladden expectant eyes.

So, the fear of Lincoln's soldiers waned, and the fear of the ghosts grew apace. Each dusky servitor reviewed again and again every trifling errand that could take him past the ruin on that dreaded night. The work on Fairfax Farms was never so thoroughly done. All was in order. Everybody would be within doors by sunset or soon after.

That very afternoon Simmons came from Bellaire with news of a great battle. This time the Confederates were victorious. Ghosts were forgotten. Hats were thrown high and there were singing and shouting and bonfires. Every cabin was deserted. The children danced around the fires and giggled and chattered. The men and women were wild;—all but Mammy Sheba. She sat smiling while tears rained over her face: "Mas' Jaspas done been dar, My boy done it all. He done chase dem Yanks."

So it was whenever war news came to the Farms. Others might burn tar barrels, wave their hats and shout themselves hoarse. Mammy only knew if

defeat came to the Federal troops, "Mas' Jaspa done ben dar."

When the tide of battle surged from Virginia into Kentucky, when Zollicoffer met defeat and death at Mill Spring, when Fort Henry passed into the hands of the enemy, when there were

"Hearts swelling with rapture
For Donelson's capture,
Hearts breaking with aching
For Donelson's slain."

Mammy was sure that somehow her boy had not been there; "ef he ben dah, all dem Yanks would got demsefs killed."

But her boy had been at Fort Donelson, and, the disabling of his sword arm early in the engagement sent him from the field, saving him from falling a prisoner to the Federals, and, a few days later bringing him home. He sent a message to Simmons to have the carriage to meet him on a certain day at a certain hour. All the bemoaning of the reverses suffered by the Confederate army was hushed. The master must not be reproached by so much as a look.

At the appointed time the closed carriage, half filled with comforts and cushions, with big Tim on the seat with Pomp, went to meet the master. Sheba managed the expedition. Tim must go to support "Mas' Jaspa; nobody knowed how bad he was hurt."

The whole force of the Farms stood about the veranda steps when the carriage came back. Sheba was in the open door, with a back-ground of warm light from big open fires. Tim and Pomp looked in-

expressible things as they came into view. Pomp was about to get down when Tim ordered him to keep his seat "an' hol' onto dem hosses." Then with the greatest formality, his hat tucked under his arm, he opened the door and assisted Captain Fairfax to the ground. Then, when Sheba was hurrying down the steps to greet "Mas' Jaspas po' boy" with his arm in a sling, he turned and with his left hand assisted from the carriage a tall slender, blonde girl. Was there ever such a wonder? Fairfax, meeting the open mouths and round brown eyes of his slaves, laughed in the low pleasant way they all knew so well. As Mammy Sheba reached his side and touched tenderly his bandaged arm, he said for her and the rest:

"You see I got myself hurt a little in the fight. I happened to meet Miss Westlake, and she took such kindly care of me that I fell in love with her and we called in the chaplain, and he married us. Now you'll have a Missus to take care of you when I'm away."

Sheba's heart went out to the slender girlish figure beside her master, when she saw the gentle, protecting air, heard the timid, "Take care, Dear," and the delicate hand was extended to guide or support the stalwart soldier. Fairfax smiled indulgently as he said to Sheba:

"Mrs. Fairfax thinks I'm made of glass, she's afraid I may get broken. Isn't that so, Marcia?"

"Not quite. Your nurse will know how careful we must be when she sees your arm."

"Ah yes, no doubt you and Mammy will have a good time making me believe I'm nearly killed, but,

I'll be good as new and up and away within a few days."

Between the two, wife of a few days and nurse of many years, he entered the house. Everything was warm, bright, cheerful. Mrs. Fairfax looked about her with half frightened eyes. The rooms were so lofty and wide. There were servants at every turn. Ceely was called and put into the service of the new mistress. The faithful agile Prax took possession of his master, and giant Tim fell into the background. No one dared, excepting Sheba, stay near the master while his toilet was made. The bride, looking on, wondered what would be her position in the midst of the devotion of this crowd of slaves.

Next day she made an effectual attempt to take the place with her husband that she had occupied before coming home,—that of chief nurse and advisor. She insisted on doing everything for him. Before night she was very weary, and yet she would not delegate her cares to Sheba until Fairfax playfully commanded her to go to her room, let Ceely brush her hair and try to take a nap.

This day was like those that followed. If Sheba offered assistance when it was really needed Mrs. Fairfax politely refused. If Sheba insisted, encouraged by a smile from her master, she was sent away on errands that were unnecessary. It was the same way with the others. They were allowed to do nothing for their master. If Fairfax remonstrated, his pretty graceful wife had only to say: "I must be first with you, dear."

"You are first, but, not as a servant."

He could see that the slaves were hurt by having his wife continually stand between them and himself,

and, they were forming an opinion of her that nettled him. He felt more fretted over the matter than he would acknowledge. It seemed such a small thing to be worried about. One afternoon, after he had almost forcibly sent Mrs. Fairfax away with Ceely, he wandered about the house looking for Sheba. He found her in her own snug room that opened from the hall on the first floor.

"May I come in, Mammy? This always was the best room in the house."

"Laws honey, co'se you may come in. Seems lak I neva see yo now, Mis Fai'fax keeps yo so," and Mammy looked ready to cry.

Fairfax laughed and patted her hand: "You see Mammy, I'm the first husband Marcia ever had," and he settled himself in the big arm chair cushioned with patch work, while Sheba put a pillow for his head and another for his wounded arm.

"Then too," he continued, "you know she's a Northern girl. She doesn't know you black folks as well as she will by and by. I met her first two or three years ago when we were up north in the Adirondacks. She and Salome and Aunt Agnes were together nearly every day for two months or more. Adelaide was there too. It was a merry party." He sighed and closed his eyes. "It's a queer world Mammy."

"Yes, Mas' Jaspa, an' de queerest ting is dat you fotch home a Yankee girl. How she come to be dar 'mong de sojers?"

"Her father and her brother were in the Federal army. Last summer her father was ill and she came South to nurse him. He was killed the other day at

Fort Donelson. Her brother has been missing since the fight at Mill Springs. After I was wounded I met her, and she was so perfectly helpless and miserable. She didn't know what to do with herself. Poor girl, she never had a home. Her mother died when she was too young to know anything about it, and since her school days she has lived in hotels and boarding houses. With her father killed and her brother not heard from for more than a month, the poor child was frightened and lonely as you can imagine. She was going through the hospital to see if possibly her brother might not be there when she saw me. She was like a lost child. First to soothe her, I told her I'd get a maid for her and bring her here. She demurred, feeling it would not be proper. Said she thought some of joining the hospital corps as, now that her father was gone she did not care to go to the Indiana town where they had lived. She hoped to find her brother. I felt so sorry for her, Mammy, after talking the matter over several times, that at last I put my best arm around her and asked her if she could possibly let the chaplain come in and make her the wife of a battered old rebel."

"Now dat's das lak my boy Jaspa, des marry a Yank to be good to huh."

"But it's a very pretty Yank, don't you think so?"

"Yas, she's pooty, but, she ain't no Miss Adelaide."

"Please Mammy," and he raised his hand as if his old Mammy had struck him. "No she isn't Miss Adelaide, but she's a dear sweet girl, and I think she loves your big boy much more than he deserves. Adelaide cared neither for me nor for the South. If she had she would'nt have deserted us."

"An yo aint skeered dat Miss Ma'sha'll done go off home some day?"

"No indeed Mammy. This is her home. She'll stay here for you to love and take care of when I go back to my men. Then, you'll hear from me nearly every day. My fair-haired darling must not be left longing for a letter if I can send one. It will be pleasanter work than writing to Simmons."

Sheba was about to answer when there was a swish of skirts, in the hall, and a sweet voice, albeit with a shade of fretfulness called: "Jasper, where can you be?"

"Here Marcia, come in darling and see Mammy's room."

Sheba stood in the door smiling her broadest, and saying, "Right hyah Mis Fai'fax."

But there was no smile on the face of the mistress. She brushed past Sheba, and looking very sedate she said: "Now I *am* astonished. I had no idea that Southern gentlemen were in the habit of passing their time in the rooms of the servants."

Fairfax's face clouded, and Sheba looked half indignant, half ready to cry. For an instant all were silent. Then Sheba mumbled something about Sally and the dinner and left the room. Fairfax made no movement to rise, but he drew a low chair close to his own saying: "Excuse my rudeness, dear, I'm so comfortable. Sit here a little while."

"It seems to me you'd be more comfortable in your own room or in the parlor or library."

"I've had those rooms so long, and I always visit Mammy here. I think this is one of the cosiest nooks I ever saw."

"Well, I must confess my astonishment at your taste, as well as your judgment. The servants will have no respect for you if you treat them as your equals."

"But, my dear, I don't treat them as my equals. I couldn't;" then pausing a moment, "The fact is I never once thought of it at all. We've always lived together and we understand each other."

"Yes, I think they understand that they may do as little work as they please, and in the most slipshod manner. Some energetic Northern man would get twice as much work done as you do."

"Possibly, but I'm afraid your energetic Northern man would find himself a fit subject for the agitators. Then too, darkies are easily tempted to run away. Up to date, Fairfax Farms have never produced a runaway slave."

Mrs. Fairfax laughed, but she drew down the corners of her mouth, as if she frowned on that part of her face.

"I see no reason why the slaves should run away if all of your name have treated them as you do. It seems to me the masters would be more likely to leave the farms."

Fairfax laughed. "My dear, you surprise me. Here is all this great country seething in war because we Southerners have trafficked in flesh and blood that walks on two feet. We've been called Nigger drivers. Northern people have said we'd murder a darkey at the crook of a finger. Now here is a gentle, fair-faced girl from the north, with a bewildering mass of flaxen hair and eyes like gentians lectur-

ing her month-old rebel husband for— undue indulgence of these same blacks.”

“Oh my dear, I don’t expect you to be cruel; but they are lazy and idle. I cannot see how the work is ever done either indoors or out.”

“You’ll see by and by. There are so many of them there’s no need of hurry. You’ll find too, they are the most affectionate creatures under the sun.”

“Yes, I see they are very fond of you. They really make me jealous,” and Mrs. Fairfax laughed and colored.

“They’ll be just as fond of you if you’ll only allow them to love you and take care of you.”

“I’m afraid I’m not the kind of woman for servants to love. I believe,” and Mrs. Fairfax laughed and looked at her husband interrogatively, “that if I’m left here in charge you’ll find a different state of affairs when you next come home.”

“Now darling,” and he smoothed her bright hair with his left hand, “I wish you would just be idle and happy as you can be when I go away. Leave everything to Mammy. She’s had the house ever since my mother died.”

“But dear, what shall I do to pass the time?”

“Write letters to me; keep your eyes bright; your whole sweet self pretty; that’s all.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Time sped happily, and all too swiftly until the day came when the master of Fairfax Farms in his uniform of gray said goodbye to clinging wife and sobbing slaves. The promise of as many letters as he could possibly send home in the demoralized state of the country was a comfort to Sheba. She said so as she turned from the door after watching him out of sight. Mrs. Fairfax answered her:

"I think, Sheba if you attend to your work you'll have no time to spare for lamenting over Mr. Fairfax. This house is in a dreadfully filthy state. I'm going to have it thoroughly cleaned from garret to cellar. Many of the rooms need papering. All the wood-work needs a dressing of oil. I don't believe one of the carpets have been cleaned in a year."

"Oh yas, Mis Fai'fax, all de cya'pets was done tuk up des befo' Mas' Jaspas was ma'a'id—"

"What, only a few weeks ago?" Mrs. Fairfax questioned sharply.

"Oh nome. Jes befo' Mas' Jaspas an' Miss Adelaide—"

Mrs. Fairfax interrupted with an impatient wave of her hand and a frown:

"There Sheba, that's enough. I never want to hear Miss Adelaide's name mentioned again. We'll go on with the cleaning next week."

Such hurrying and scouring and scrubbing and rubbing and dusting and managing had never been

seen at the Fairfax house before. There was no minute of rest all day long. Even the children were pressed into the service and taught the use of broom and brush. The new mistress, whose blonde head was in such striking contrast with those of her helpers, seemed to be ubiquitous. If an easy-going, easily wearied scrub woman stopped to suckle her baby, there over her shoulder stood Mrs. Fairfax saying:

"You ought to wean that child. A cup of milk would be just as good for him, and you'd waste no time nursing him."

The carpet beaters might suppose their mistress was superintending the washing of the bed room windows on the second floor; but if their long willow switches stopped while they mopped their faces with their sleeves her voice sounded at their elbows: "Now turn it and beat the other side."

When the mail was brought it was useless for any one to pause with the idea that the seal of the master's letters would be hurriedly broken and the contents read aloud. The first thing usually done was a review of the workers to see what each one was doing, and tell them what to do next; then would Mrs. Fairfax read her husband's letters for herself alone. The hungry eyes that followed her were unanswered. Once Sheba ventured to say: "I hope Mas' Jaspas' well?" and her mistress surveyed her from head to foot as she answered: "Certainly he's well; have you nothing to do?"

So it came to pass, that, whether Fairfax had news of the state of affairs at home, or guessed it because of no news, he wrote long kindly, affectionate letters

to Sheba and sent them under cover to Simmons; and the loving old woman was happy.

When the house was finished, Mrs. Fairfax turned her attention to the farms. She sent for Simmons to talk matters over with him. To her questions and suggestions he answered that he had managed the place so long according to his own ideas, subject, of course to his employer's opinions, that he "reckoned he'd better keep on in the old way, particularly as she was not a farmer, either by practice or theory."

She admitted that she knew nothing about the cultivation of land, but she could see when the fences needed mending, and certainly he knew that many of the fences were broken and ragged.

Simmons admitted the truth of this but he thought they would better wait and talk to Captain, (Fairfax was always Captain now), about it. He had thought of replacing the wooden fences with hedges, wire, or low walls built of stone from the river, but, the war had disarranged their plans and nothing had been done for the last year but patch up the old board or rail fences.

"Then," Mrs. Fairfax said, brightening "if stone fences have been talked of why not go to work at once? They will cost really nothing. The men are idle more than half the time. That old ruined house, if torn down would build a mile of fence. It's an eyesore to me, and it keeps the blacks in a constant ferment. I think I'll have a force of men at work there at once."

"But, Mrs. Fairfax," Simmons remonstrated, "I'm sure the Captain wouldn't approve of having his Aunt Agnes' house torn away."

"I'm sure I can't see why. It's of no use, it's ugly, and the land all about it might be cultivated."

"It's all just as people happen to think about such things. I, as manager of Fairfax Farms won't allow one stone to be taken from those walls without the Captain's orders."

Mrs. Fairfax's face flushed. "Very well. I wish, then, you would write Captain Fairfax at once in regard to the matter. I will do so too. Those old tumble-down walls are both disgraceful and dangerous."

In due time, Simmons came to the house and asked for the mistress. He stood at the door, and told her he had heard from Captain Fairfax in regard to pulling down the ruin.

"Will you read his letter?" he asked.

"No thank you," she answered frigidly. "Captain Fairfax has very strange tastes," and she disappeared up the stairs.

"By George I think so myself," Simmons said to Roberts when he related the remark.

"Tell you what," Roberts said, "Salome with her dash of black blood was more of a lady."

"Oh Lord yes! She was trained to it. Trouble with this one is,—put a beggar on horse-back, you know where he rides."

"Well, I wish Captain could be at home a while, to kinder set his foot down on some of the goings-on. Between the madam an' the war first thing we know every darkey'll leave the place."

No, I think not. Some few may go, but all I've to say is, they're welcome to all they'll get out of Northern folks, 'ceptin' talk. We've got a sample of it right here."

CHAPTER IX.

The summer days lengthened, and yet no sign or omen of peace. Sheba was sure that it was only a matter of time until "Mas' Jaspa done sen' all dem Yanks totin home 'bout da' own business." When the news was told her of the coming emancipation of her race from slavery, she was almost fierce in her disbelief. What could she or any of them do with freedom? Would freedom give them cabins to live in, plant the truck patch, supply them with meal, bacon, tobacco and print dresses? She cared nothing for "w'at dat man Lincum say. Mas Jaspa'd neva tu'n 'is ole Mammy out to die. No Fai'fax eva done dat."

The great day was drawing near. Only a week or two now until, as Simmons said: "The country'll be full of wandering irresponsible black vagabonds. Only hope the Northern fanatics will get a good taste of black labor with nothing to regulate it but the whim of the laborer. A free nigger won't work if he can steal."

The war news came from Fredricksburg. It was a glorious victory for the Confederates. But, other news came that blanched the cheek of the young wife, and dropped Sheba into her chair moaning. It was a telegram from young Dr. Dorne: "Meet us at station with a cot. Colonel Fairfax wounded."

"Oh! *Colonel Fairfax!*" was the exclamation of the

wife. "There's some mistake or, perhaps he's been promoted."

"That's it, you may be sure," Simmons said confidently, "He aint the man to be only a captain for very long."

"An' dem low down Yanks done hu't my boy agin! Oh ef I on'y had 'em I'd make 'em tote demse'fs back home," and Mammy, overjoyed at the prospect of again seeing her master, grieved and would not be comforted until she had him wholly in her possession, and was assured by him that his wounds were not at all serious; that it was all owing to Henry Dorne that the cot was sent for. It was the first time Dorne had ever had him down and he meant to make the most of it. Mammy would remember how they used to wrestle when they were boys, and, Henry was always thrown. Now, with the help of the Yankees he had got him down. There were no bones broken. He would not be lame. He might, to please Henry, use a cane for a short time, that was all.

For a day or two the house wore a festive air because the master was at home. Preparations were going forward for Christmas, and everyone was busy.

Then Fairfax thought he detected a new, strange and a not quite agreeable air about the house. He waited, thinking it might blow away, or explain itself. There seemed to be no trouble between Mrs. Fairfax and the slaves, no open trouble anywhere. Whenever he had an opportunity he spoke to those about him inquiring about their welfare, and mentioning their families. He was answered, but not with the old-time heartiness. Even the children looked at him furtively, reproachfully. He would

not speak to Mrs. Fairfax about it, nor to Sheba. The manner of kind old Mammy was the hardest to bear of all. Sometimes she lingered about him after everything had been done that the most zealous and skillful nurse could do, then, with a sigh, and with tears ready to fall she would hurry away. Simmons, in answer to inquiries as to the effect the coming emancipation would have on the men, only said he thought they would all stay, at least for a time. He would not give the faintest hint of the real disturbing element.

The revelation of the fears of the slaves came at last through two half grown boys. They had been sent to the hills across the river to gather laurel and other greens to make the house gay for Christmas. On returning, they laid their spoils on the veranda, and sprawled in the sun beside them. Just within the open window lay their wounded master. He had insisted that his cot be placed where the sun would fall on him, and he be left alone for a while. He was sure everybody was tired. He would read, or doze. So then, the boys talked, and only a few feet away there was a listener who smiled broadly and came near laughing out-right.

"Wondah how Mas' Fai'fax'll take keer o his-se'f w'en we-uns's all done chased away."

"W'y, de Lincum folks'll come an' take keer o' him. I jes wondah how we-uns'll done take keer of ou' sefs."

"I dun'no'. I'd neva b'lieved Mas' Fai'fax a driv' we-uns all out. Mammy Sheba say she won't go."

"Yas an' den Mas Fai'fax'll jes tak 'is sword an' chase 'er out, lak 'e's ben stickin dem Yanks. I'se jes gwine to tote myse'f off jes de minit Mas Fai'fax

says "Yo' niggas git out o' hyah! Youens go an' wo'k fo' Lincum."

Fairfax could scarcely believe his senses. Was this the understanding the slaves had of the Emancipation Act? The boys picked up their branches and loitered away with them.

"Ah well," the master sighed, and then he laughed. "Some are born free, some achieve freedom, and some have freedom thrust upon them. Like anything else that comes as an alien gift, without price, it's a misfit. In the calendar of fate there are no bargain days. The gods never cut prices."

Bye and bye, Mrs. Fairfax came in softly. She thought her patient might be asleep. She was delighted to find him awake and looking rested and cheerful. She knelt beside the cot and told him how handsome he was and how fine his new title sounded. She was most impatient to see him up and in his new uniform.

Then Sheba came with his lunch, and she spread a little table and husband and wife had a cozy meal together. When Sheba came to clear away the things her master said:

"Mammy, I wish you'd hunt up that old wheel-chair, and have Tim and Zack come and help me out on the veranda this evening when the sun gets round west. I want to see all the folks. I've something to say to them."

"Laws Mas Jaspa, youens aint well enough to talk to dat passle o' niggas. Hopes yo' aint gwine fo' to sen' weuns off fo' Lincum done said yo' must?"

The old woman looked at him from where she stood with such reproachful eyes that Fairfax began

to feel hysterical. Mrs. Fairfax was about to send Sheba out of the room, but he raised himself on his elbow: "Come here Mammy, you make me feel as I used to when I was a little fellow and had been bad. What in the world would this house do without you? If my own mother was living to-day I'd as soon think of sending her away as you. There, now, don't cry, I'll be good," and Fairfax playfully patted his nurse's turbaned head as she knelt beside his cot. He laughed, but tears were brimming in his eyes.

"Now go and find the chair. I want to talk to all the folks, and have them understand all about this new order of things."

A few hours later, partially dressed, his wounded leg well muffled in blankets, Colonel Fairfax was wheeled out to meet his slaves. It was a mild day, even for the time of year and the locality. There was no hint of frost in the air, and the blacks stood, coatless and hatless. All were there, men, women and children, over two hundred of them. Some of them were defiant, some sad, a few hopeful, the rest, old, gray uncles and aunties resigned and obedient. If Mas' Fai'fax said go, then go they must and would without grumbling.

Mrs. Fairfax hovered round her husband, adjusting his wraps, almost purring, so soft and kittenish were her movements. Sheba stood near, half reassured, but still tearful and despondent.

"Come back here, Tim," the master called after the big fellow as he slouched down the steps. "I can't talk to you folks in this chair. Come and let me lean on you."

Tim was by his side instantly and a half dozen others were ready to help him from his chair.

Mrs. Fairfax remonstrated, almost tearfully, but, to no purpose. Big Tim, a half head taller than his master stood there and supported him as easily as his mistress might have held a two-years-old baby.

"There, that's all right. You don't find me too heavy?"

"Lawd no, Mas Co'nel."

"You black rascal! I wonder what I'll do when you're gone."

"Dat's so Mas Co'nel, I s'pects none dese boys caint help youens lak I kin."

"We'll see if we can't arrange for some of you to stay. That's what I want to say to you."

Then he raised his voice so as to be heard by all:

"It will be but a few days now until all of you will be free. You know what that means. You need not then ask permission of Simmons nor Roberts, nor even of me to leave the place. You can go away whenever you please, and stay as long as you please."

"But Mas. Jasper," asked a stalwart field hand from the midst of the group, "W'en weuns git raidy fo' to come back kin weuns go into de same cabin?"

"I rather think not," Fairfax answered hesitatingly. "You know that as free men, you'll work for wages and have cabins that you will buy or pay rent for. When you leave your cabin, and quit work, of course some other man must take it and your work."

"Oh des lak po' w'ite trash!" sneered a tall, coal-black woman with a baby on her arm. "Wall Sim, weuns mote des as wall go an' fling ou'sefs in de ribber."

"No, don't do that Beck," the master said laughing. "Listen now, and I'll tell you what may be done. You know, every one of you whether or not you want to stay here. You know, all of you, whether or not I have treated you unkindly. You who are middle-aged can say if my father was or was not a good master. You who are gray can bear witness as to my grandfather."

A murmur of assent ran through the crowd, and the old men and women fell to weeping.

"Now listen. I must get through quickly. I'm tired and so is Tim."

But Tim protested: "Fo' Gaud, Mas' Fai'fax I could done hole onto to youens tel de jedgment an' not be tiad."

"I have only to say now, that if any of you feel that you have been over-worked, or under-fed, or in any way badly treated by me or by my father or by my grandfather, say so now. Then, go to your cabins, and work no more for me, nor for any one, as long as I own a foot of land or have a dollar in my pocket."

"Oh Mas' Fai'fax!" "Oh good Lawd Mas' Jaspa!" "Des heah dat boy!" were some of the exclamations from the laughing, weeping blacks.

"Now listen again. You know all about the work that must be done here. You know what will happen if it isn't done. There will be no crops and the land will soon go to ruin. As many of you as want to stay, can do so. Simmons and Roberts will stay too, as managers; not overseers any more if you don't like the name. You will have your cabins to live in, your truck patch, and your wages every Saturday noon. You'll go with your money and buy your

meal and bacon instead of getting them from Mammy at the store house. Same way about your clothes."

"How 'bout bacca, Mas' Jaspa?" an old hobbling negro asked timidly.

Fairfax laughed: "Oh uncle Jake you'll have plenty of money for tobacco."

"I des wants fo' to ax youens one ting Mas' Fai'fax," and a middle-aged man stepped to the front, hat in hand.

"Yes, Dave, what is it?"

The man's face was pleasant, his voice was low and musical. His shirt was open at the throat and his sleeves were turned up from his wrists. He was a symmetrical figure, all bone and muscle. He was black and glossy as ebony.

I des wants to know Mas Jaspa, ef youens minds dat man dat offe'd yo' fifteen hund'ed dolla's fo' me las' yeah."

"Yes Dave, I remember."

"Well den, aint I done worf's much now es I was den?"

"Why Dave, you're worth your weight in these damned shin plasters that the people at Washington tell us are money. You were worth it then and you're worth it now."

"Den I wants to know, Mas Fai'fax w'at youens gwine fo' to git fo' all wcuns w'en Lincum done tak weuns way f'om youens?"

"You see Dave, Mr. Lincoln and other men in the north think I've no right to you black folks; so they are going to take you away and make free men and women of you. They say it's wicked for us to live as we've been living."

"Am Mas' Lincum gwine fo' to take all de hosses an' de cows?"

"No Dave, nothing of that kind."

"Tak yo' wife?"

Fairfax laughed and his face flushed as he turned to look at his wife who stood close beside him and made believe that she was helping Tim.

"I reckon not, sweetheart. No Dave, one wife deserted me for the North, but it was not this one."

"Mean low down w'ite trash," Dave muttered.

Sheba was standing near her master's chair with bare arms akimbo.

"I kaint see how Miss Adelaide eva done dese'ted youens."

"Ah Mammy," and Fairfax rested his hand on her broad shoulder, "all women are not as much in love with your boy as you are. But, I hope you and I are not to be separated?"

She turned quickly, clinging to his hand with both her own: "Oh Mas' Jaspas, it done broke my po' ole brack hea't w'en dey done tole me yo' gwine fo to sen' weuns off. W'at would yo' po' deah dead daddy an' mammy a said? I done tole dese igeram niggahs I'se not gwine fo' to go. An' I tole po' Mis Fai'fax, yo' ma so. W'at was dat she done tole me las' ting w'en she lay dyin'? She des holt onto me, an' say, Sheba, tak' keer o' my lil boy, an' haint I done it Mas' Jaspas? Ef I haint, I'se des raidy to hev my po' ole haid chopped clean off, an' I'll go an' tell yo' ma I done all de best I kin."

"Oh but, Mammy you have taken care of me!" and Fairfax dropped into his chair. His old nurse crouched at his feet and leaned her head on his knees.

"I remember when my dear young mother died. There was no one to comfort my father and me but you Mammy. You've always been the one for me to look to when I've been sad or glad, and you've never failed me Mammy. I don't see how I ever could get on without you. Whatever the rest do I think you must stay and take care of Marcia and the place for me till the war is over.

"And now boys," turning to the waiting slaves, I think we understand each other. Go to your suppers. We'll have one more Christmas together; as good a Christmas as Fairfax Farms ever saw. God knows where we'll all be next year. Tim, your mistress thinks she can put me back in the house, but, probably you'd better do it;" and there was a great chorus of laughing in all keys at the master's joke.

CHAPTER X.

That Christmas and New Year time was a happy one at Fairfax Farms. The master was at home and so nearly well of his wounds that one regret pervaded the place and tempered the gladness: He must soon go away. True he walked very slowly and used a cane, but Mammy insisted that this was "on'y to pac'fy dat meddlin' Henry," She knew too, that this going away would be his last. Very soon now he would "chase all dem pesky Yanks back whah dey b'long. Den he'd be home fo' good."

On the first day of the year, there was a grand feast for the black Citizens. Nothing was spared. Most of all there were good wishes and vows of perpetual loyalty exchanged between master and men. It was a day many times talked of during the next two gloomy years.

It was in the mild days of the first of February when Colonel Fairfax rejoined the army. The work on the farms was managed as usual, but the new citizens needed much help in the way of advice in using their earnings.

The spring came with its promises; the long days of summer smiled over fields where waved billowy grass, golden wheat and giant corn, and over other fields where cannon roared and where the sharp continuous rattle of the Winchester sent up clouds of smoke, incense to the insatiable god of war; and

where men lay dying with faces turned to the sky or buried in the blood-soaked earth.

There was no new thing under the sun. There were only "battle and murder and sudden death."

Women sat in their homes waiting, listening, gazing afar with eyes dim with the pathos of an infinite patience, their hair whitening day by day.

The looms that wove crape kept up their droning from morning till night, and from night till morning phantoms plied the shuttles and kept the spindles turning.

In the Fairfax house, as this year, opening with so much good feeling grew apace, discontent grew with it. The mistress, always exacting, was now tyrannical, as she saw her liberal allowance for indoor help dwindling away with so little work accomplished in exchange. There were grumblings and threat-enings, but, so great was the fear of "Lincum's sojers" not one of the women left the house. Sheba counselled patience.

"Des wait," she would say, "Des wait. Long in de fall it'll be all right. Mis Fai'fax'll hev somefin elts to tink 'bout den, an' she'll be mos' usen to weuns. Youens des 'have yo'se'fs, an' see if Mammy aint right."

It came to pass as Sheba had prophesied. "Along in the fall" a little girl baby came to keep Mrs. Fairfax dependent and helpless for a while and smoothe away hard thoughts from the minds of her servants. At first the little one seemed bound to be but one more element of discord. The expectant mother made inquiries of Doctor Dorne *pere*, in regard to a nurse.

"Why, bless your heart, Mrs. Fairfax, where's Sheba?"

"But I must have a white nurse."

"My dear madam, I've no idea where you'd find a white nurse. I never saw one south of Mason and Dixon's line."

"Couldn't one be sent for?"

Doctor Dorne smiled and shook his head.

"If you care to try;—you know the state of the country;—the women in the North find something great and grand in braving the possibilities of long marches, starvation, insults from vagabonds of both sections, and a hundred nameless evils for the sake of the boys in blue. But, this matter of yours is an old story. If you know a white nurse who is personally devoted to you, it would be pleasant to have her."

"I don't know any of any kind."

"Well, there's no better nurse in the state of Kentucky nor out of it, than Sheba."

"But she's wholly uneducated. She doesn't even read."

"So much the better. She has no theories of her own. She's obedient to the orders of her superior officer—the physician in charge, and to the symptoms of her patient. She's had no books to destroy her instinct."

When the baby came Doctor Dorne installed Sheba as nurse for mother and child as she had been for the little one's father and grandmother. Further, the doctor enacting the role of the greatest tyrant of his tyrannical class, declared that Mrs. Fairfax must not only yield him unquestioning obedience, but that she

must not dispute Sheba's care by so much as the movement of an eye-lash.

There was great regret in the quarters when Sheba reported the arrival of a plump little daughter. The general exclamation was: "Sech a pity! It caint be named Jaspa!" When Sheba told her mistress of this, she was greatly astonished to see Mrs. Fairfax fondle the tiny hands and, then, without lifting her eyes say gently:

"Mama's wee girl can't have her father's name, but she can be named for the beautiful grandmother down in the parlor. Her name will be Zoe."

So in due time came Dr. Ballantyne and his sweet-faced wife. Doctor Dorne and his wife and a few other friends to see the little daughter of the house of Fairfax christened Zoe Westlake. The wide fire-places were heaped with blazing logs making the air like summer. The mellow October sunshine poured in at the long windows and idealized all that it touched.

Mrs. Fairfax had not disdained the services of big Tim, but laughingly allowed him to carry her from her room and place her in her invalid's chair near the fire. She looked all sweet, gentle womanliness in her soft lace-trimmed gown. There was a shimmer of pink on her cheeks, and Sheba said to the doctor; "Ef Mas Jaspa on'y see Missy now, he'd know who done tuk ca' o' huh."

"Yes indeed Sheba, you and I beat the world."

All the blacks were crowded into the halls, the doorways, and the lower end of the long parlors. When everything was in readiness, Sheba came in with the

baby, clothed in the baptismal robe of costly lace that had done duty for its father and its grandfather.

After the baptismal service Dr. Ballantyne read the prayer to be used "in time of war and tumults." There had been no word in the simple ceremony about the absent father, but now there were sobs from the servants, and tears filled the eyes of their mistress.

For weeks and months the people of Fairfax Farms had followed with the patience and hope born of the times, the movements of Lee's army. Wherever Lee was, there was the master. The letters that came were loving, hopeful, inspiring. Those to Sheba were full of the kindest thoughts for the faithful servant, and of exhortations in regard to his wife. "I know you'll be kind to my dear girl, Mammy. You are so patient, so reasonable. You were always so good to me. When I, almost a baby, had no mother, what would have become of me if it hadn't been for you Mammy? My darling wife is young. She knows nothing of home life. I know if you have the care of her she will be well and strong in due time. Then, what a happy coming home there will be for me when this cruel war is over."

There was "no possibility now of a furlough," he wrote his wife, "excepting a Yankee bullet or bayonet earns me one; but, I believe your prayers are shielding me. In the thickest of battles, nothing touches me. My brave men fall around me like flies when the frost comes; I go unscathed. For your sake, dear, and for our precious little daughter I am glad this is so. But, what a land of mourning is my beloved South! What wailing there must be too in

the states that forced this quarrel upon us! Be patient and brave darling. Teach the little one to know my face. God knows if ever she will see more than the pictures you have. Tell me how she looks. Has she your blue *blue* eyes, or are they the Fairfax gray? In either case they are most precious; the blue for her sweet mother's sake, the grey for the uniform I wear."

After this letter, when Zoe was but a few weeks old there was silence. What it meant could be partially guessed by the news that a part of Lee's army had been captured by Meade on the Rappahannock. After weeks of suspense came a long delayed letter from a hospital attendant. Colonel Fairfax was seriously wounded and a prisoner. Then silence again for weeks.

In this time of sorrow Mrs. Fairfax learned to know her nurse, and through her, the rest of the servants. As she lay sleepless through the long nights, it was Sheba's hands that passed over her hair and about her shoulders with the touch one uses when soothing a troubled child. It was Sheba who would not allow her to give way to her fears because it would make "de deah lil baby sick." It was Sheba who knelt by her bed and asked "de deah Lawd to sen' home Mas' Jaspa, even ef he had to kill all dem Yanks an' all de niggahs." For herself she was "done raidy fo' to go ef 'e wanted huh. Jes sen' 'long de chayot, but please Lawd don' fo'git to sen' somebody to tek ca' o' Missy an' de lil baby."

Mrs. Fairfax all unused to such childish confidence in prayer and such unswerving devotion to the master and his family, learned many lessons while in her

semi-invalid condition with this terrible uncertainty, like a great cloud upon her. After many weeks of suspense, there came a letter from Colonel Fairfax himself. He was but just able to write, and still a prisoner. After this, letters were frequent, but, would he never be free? It was months before there was a possibility of an exchange, then, one day Dave had been to Bellaire and somebody there had a telegram. There had been an exchange of prisoners. He came up the drive waving his hat and shouting. It was about noon. The quarters were full of the field hands at dinner. They poured out and swarmed up about the house. Mrs. Fairfax came out with Zoe in her arms. Dave caught the baby, and setting her on his shoulder danced and capered about while he told her that her "Daddy done kick down dat Yankee jail an' 'e was out wid 'is sword an' 'is gun an' 'is bay'net des stickin' dem Yanks til dey squeel."

Zoe clapped her hands and laughed because of the noise, and she was voted "Daddy's own lil gal. Co'se *she* knows w'at weuns say."

Then came news of battles, fierce and long. Two horrible days in the Wilderness, and a few days later the carnival of death at Spottsylvania. All through the year there was only waiting for war news, and then weeping and mourning afterwards.

Mrs. Fairfax, growing more in sympathy with her servants through their devotion to her husband and their love for her baby for its father's sake, found there was one point upon which they could agree. This was the garnering of everything that the farms produced most carefully, doleing out the very smallest possible quantity for home necessities, and send-

ing all the surplus directly to Colonel Fairfax, to be distributed as he saw fit. There was no thought of barter or sale. When Simmons mentioned the enormous prices that might be obtained his mistress answered: "I cannot do that. My husband's cause is mine. His people are my people. If he comes home, no matter how the war ends, I want no long purse to give him, no fine dresses and jewels to flaunt in his eyes and say, 'here is this price of our country's necessities.' If he doesn't come home we can feel that we did all we could to help him."

Then Simmons said to his son-in-law; "By George the Madam aint such a mud-sill after all."

Such rigid economy as was practiced had never been dreamed of on Fairfax Farms. But, there was no grumbling about it. When Mrs. Fairfax gave orders for her own frugal meals, no better than they had in the quarters, and Sally looked her remonstrance, the answer was: "I hope Sally that the master and his brave men have as good and enough of it."

One day Mrs. Fairfax was attracted to the door by the laughter and shouting of the black children on the veranda. They had little Zoe in their midst on a gay blanket spread on the floor. The children were squatted or sprawled all around her, and one of them had given her a piece of hoe cake. Baby fashion she filled her mouth with it. Then seeing her crowd of attendants laugh and shout and clap their hands, she laughed too, and crowed and sputtered and rolled over and over. Her mother caught her up and caressed her rapturously. "She's papa's own little darling!

She can eat hoe cake as well as mama and all the rest!"

The autumn passed and the winter. When the news came that Lee was in command of the Confederate army, then there were bon-fires and rejoicings at Fairfax Farms. "Now Mas' Jaspa would hev a fai' show. The wa' would soon be ovah." So it was, but not in the way these devoted servants expected. Disaster and defeat followed each other thick and fast. The Cause for which mountains of treasure had been lavished, for which rivers of blood had been spilled, for which the light of innumerable homes had been quenched, was lost. All along the lines of the tide of war the land was enriched by the blood of patriots—patriots, whether they wore the blue or the gray. Whatever may be the faults of the leaders, whatever may be the sins of demagogues, whatever blunders of ambitious politicians plunge a country into war, the rank and file of armies, the men who leave their ploughs and workshops and send home badly spelled letters to wife or sweetheart, these are the patriots; these die for the cause they believe in. With them their country is always right. These are the heroes.

CHAPTER XI.

One fair day in June, after an absence of two and one half years, Jasper Fairfax came home. What changes had grown about him! But, he declared that the most wonderful new element in his surroundings was Baby Zoe. When she was put into his arms the tears started in his eyes.

"How strange it is!" he said. "While I was away, though I remembered even in my dreams the fair-haired girl who had kissed me good-bye and who wrote me such bracing letters, yet, it never seemed a reality that she was here to stay. Now here is another pair of blue eyes, smiling at me, and the little miracle to whom they belong, calls me 'Papa,' with a bashful, half doubtful air. Ah she's so sweet, and so white and so—like her mother! It's good to be home again! Good to know the carnage is ended, even if our Cause is lost. There are many scars of the war that only time can efface, changes that it will require generations to outgrow."

In this quiet out-of-the-way neighborhood there were fewer changes than in parts of the South that had been at the mercy of the soldiery, or where battles had been waged. Here farms showed that the eye of the master had been withdrawn. Repairs were needed, but there was no money. Nothing could be done until after the harvesting of the season's crops. It was a time of apathetic waiting.

Fairfax often recalled the remark of Dr. Henry

Dorne as they met the first time after being 'mustered out'. The eyes of the young surgeon were half sad, half smiling as he slapped his friend's shoulder, exclaiming: "Colonel, we're out of a job."

The whole country was out of a job. "But," Fairfax would say to himself and others, "We made a good fight. We'll be rebels now for all time. If we had succeeded, we'd have been patriots. We had the worst of the war by having the enemy within our gates. The Northern states were not over-run as ours were, their defenceless women were not subjected to the indignities that ours were. But, we peopled their graveyards, besides fertilizing many a Southern spot with their dearest and best. They've got our darkies, and first thing we know, I reckon they'll make voters of them. I wish them joy."

After the stirring life of camp and field, Fairfax felt that he could never go back to the dolce far niente of ante bellum days. He might be undecided for a time in finding where to pick up the lost threads of civil life but, he would find them. He surveyed his farms with Simmons, and talked over the matter of improvements. Then, there were always Marcia and Baby to be glad to see him in the house. There were many things needing to be done, but, money, money, nothing could be done without money, and there was no money in the country. Somebody ought to make a business of supplying money to their neighbors. There was Tottenham's bank, but,— After consultations with farm neighbors and business and professional friends in Bellaire, Fairfax concluded that as soon as the matter could be arranged he would go into banking. He said: "As a family man, it isn't

dignified to be idle. I've called myself a farmer, but, Simmons takes the actualities off my hands, and I'm willing. I have no profession, nor do I want one. I'll try business, and I believe, after a time, I'll fit into the harness. This one thing I'm determined upon: Whoever is associated with me in banking must agree to be satisfied with very ordinary salaries. Our loans will be to old friends and neighbors. There will be no fleecing."

It came to pass that the benevolent banking project was nearer materialization than its most ardent supporters dreamed. It was the close of a warm day in August. A light breeze swept down from the hills beyond the river bringing the odor of woods and water with it, and it loitered over the levels. Fairfax sat with his wife on the veranda. Near them Sheba swung Zoe in a hammock and crooned a lullaby.

They heard the creak of the big gate, and then the clatter of wheels on the drive. A light buggy carrying a tall, very blonde man and a black driver stopped at the steps.

Mrs. Fairfax, with the breathless exclamation: "Why it's George!" flew down to meet them, and was clasped in her brother's arms.

"The same pretty sister, after all these years," he said as he held her at arm's length after the first embrace. "You make me forget time entirely."

"Dear," she said turning to her husband who had followed her, "this is brother of whom I told you, and who we supposed killed and buried amongst the unidentified at Mill Springs."

There was handshaking between the two men, Fairfax giving a hearty welcome to the only relative

his wife possessed, and Westlake eyeing his brother-in-law from head to foot as he drawled: "Ah, Colonel, glad to make your acquaintance."

"Where is your baggage?" Fairfax asked.

"At the Bellaire House. Just got in from Washington two hours ago."

"Wouldn't you better send for it at once? Let this trap go, and I'll send one of the boys. Is it in shape to be brought?"

"I rather guess not. Lots of things are unpacked, and—I've no man now.

"Well perhaps we can supply you what you need for the night. Send this fellow away. My wife's brother must not stop at a tavern while we have a roof. Away you go Scipio," and he waved the grinning driver towards the gate.

Mrs. Fairfax opened her eyes very wide. Where had this long lost brother sprung from? and what had he been doing that he was able to say with such an air of accustomedness "I've no man now?"

They grouped themselves on the veranda. Mrs. Fairfax, all impatience said, "There's only one thing to be thought of now. Tell us what happened to you at Mill Springs. It seemed as if the earth had opened and swallowed you. Papa and I did everything possible to find you. No one had seen you, living or dead. We could only suppose you had been mangled beyond recognition."

"You came very near the truth in your supposition. For a week after the fight, I knew nothing. I came back to consciousness to find myself in the cabin of a char-coal burner, nestled away in the woods. There were five others that the fellow had

picked up and cared for as well as he could. I was the only one very badly wounded, and when the boys left me I could barely speak. I asked them to find father, and you; but I guess they thought I'd soon be dead. At least, I never heard from—anybody, and I lay there in that hut for nine weeks."

"With no other care than the char-coal burner's?" Mrs. Fairfax asked.

"None. He gave me the best he could and, it wasn't bad. He used plenty of water for my wounds. Had one here on the back of my head that was the most troublesome. No bones were broken excepting in this arm," and he held up his left. "I've carried a stiff elbow in memorian since then.

"As soon as I was able, I started on track of our division. I soon found out what had happened father, but you I had no trace of until a week ago. I supposed that after father's death you would go to Madison, and I wrote you there. I expected no answer, as I was on my way to report to my Company. Of course I was discharged as unfit for service. Then I went to Madison. No one there had heard a word from you since you went away."

Westlake paused and laughed. "You always were such a conscientious correspondent! Did she ever write you any letters Colonel?"

"Yes indeed. Marcia was one of the most regular correspondents I ever had."

"Well, I suppose it was so new to have a husband. Nobody in Madison had ever heard a word from her. I did everything I could to trace you, and have kept a paragraph in one Madison, one

Louisville and one Cincinnati paper, all these years, and at last found you by the merest accident."

"Yes? and how was it?"

"After my discharge, and a few weeks spent in looking for you, I went into business."

"But, dear, how could you go into business? Papa had no money, and you couldn't get a pension then?"

"No. You probably didn't know, neither did I at the time, but Sipes of the Madison City bank mentioned to me, incidentally, supposing that I did know, that father had left a very snug little sum with him just before joining the army. There was no claimant for this that I could discover but myself. I took possession, and now I'm ready to render you your share of it with a good liberal interest."

Westlake laughed and winked at his sister.

"What was your business? Fairfax asked.

"Mules."

Again the sly laugh, and this time Fairfax was given the wink, but Westlake dropped his eyes under the answering gaze of his host.

"You see," he said apologetically, "about that time you fellows here in the South were making Uncle Sam dance to your own tunes. I begun to feel that Lincoln and the rest had been mistaken, and, if the country was going to the devil I might as well feather my nest out of the Government as to let some other fellow have the job."

Mrs. Fairfax laughed nervously. She cast flitting glances at her husband who smoked in silence but with a hard look in his eyes that she knew meant disapproval of her brother. She spoke lightly as she said:

"Make a clean confession now, George, tell us how much money you made out of Uncle Sam in his days of necessity."

"Not so very much, but, it will serve. I have, in cold cash, where it can be handed out to me for the asking, a trifle over," he lifted one finger, "six figures."

Fairfax without turning his eyes asked: "Were there many patriots of your kind in the North?"

"Hundreds of them," Westlake answered briskly. "All over the country you hear of the shoddy aristocracy. This means the men who grew wealthy by selling to the Government the cheap gummy clothing that fell to pieces if it got wet. No men ever made money faster than those who sold food supplies to the Union Army. Others, like myself dealt in mules and horses. It grew to be a great joke to put M. D. after our names. It only meant mule dealer. The doctors said it slandered them, but we've got the money we can stand their grumblings, and the jokes of the rest."

"Just so," Fairfax grunted. "And now, since that source of wealth is exhausted, what are you going to do?"

"I want to invest in something that's reasonably safe, and will bring me a respectable living."

"There are many businesses that will do that if a man understands. Have you had any business training?"

"None excepting in mules. I was reading law at the breaking out of the war. I want to put this lucre where it will be piling up a little, and then I'll be in mind to take up Blackstone again. I've an idea that there are good places for money in the South."

Fairfax laughed dryly: "There are a good many places where it's needed sorely."

"But George," Mrs. Fairfax said, "you were going to say how you happened to find us. How was it?"

"Oh yes, I got myself side-tracked with my mules." He laughed again, with a quick glance at Fairfax.

"I was finishing up some business with some people in Washington the other day when a Captain Fergus came in. I was introduced to him, and he repeated my name as if remembering something. Bye and bye he told me that one of the strangest happenings he knew in the war, was in connection with a tall blonde Northern girl named Westlake. It was at Fort Donelson. Her father had been killed there, her brother missing since some other fight. The girl was searching through the hospitals;—by the way Fergus was wounded at the time. He saw Miss Westlake sometime and some place recognize as an old friend a Confederate officer, and after a few days an army chaplain married the two, and they went away together, the officer with his sword arm in a sling. He remembered the Confederate's name was Fairfax and he was a Kentuckian. He heard him talked of by some of his men who were wounded and prisoners. So there's the whole story."

"And isn't it strange too, that this man we never heard of should have known and remembered our strange courtship and marriage!" and Mrs. Fairfax slipped her hand into her husband's.

"Very strange. But many strange things happened in those dreadful times."

"And now dear, here is George, anxious to invest his money, and here are you pining for sufficient cash

to go into banking for the sake of our needy neighbors. What could be more fortunate?"

"You don't say so!" Westlake exclaimed. "Why, when I inquired about you in Washington, and later in Bellaire, I was told that you were one of the richest and best known men in Kentucky."

"You see my wealth," and Fairfax waved his hands outward. "I have these farms, but, while I was in the army, your sister was not so provident as you were. She hoarded no money. She kept in the graneries and store-rooms barely enough for herself and her managers and servants. All the rest of the produce of these acres, God bless my wife, went to feed our soldiers; went as a gift."

"Why Marcia! Who would have dreamed of you being such a good rebel!"

Mrs. Fairfax laughed, but the laugh sounded hysterical: "I did what I could, George, and, fortune favors the brave. Now when we need money so much, here you come with your heavy purse, and I know you'll be glad to trust Jasper with it."

"Of course. That goes without saying. I'll be awfully glad to get the business all settled. I've loafed long enough. I'm tired of the odor of mules, I want to smell sheep-skin for a while."

CHAPTER XII.

Nowhere in the South was the work of domestic reconstruction commenced more promptly, nor pushed more vigorously, after the war, than in and about the town of Bellaire. Many families consisted now of women and children and a few faithful blacks, some able-bodied, many too old for service.

All the plain necessities of life were high-priced, and very many things that people in moderate circumstances had been accustomed to were not to be had at any price. The establishment of the new bank with Colonel Fairfax as president was a great benefit to the people. There was no secret made of the origin of the money. At first, in the bitterness of defeat it was hard to accept help from a Northern man; but, Fairfax explained that it was not charity, neither had his brother-in-law obtained his wealth in so patriotic a fashion as to call for any scruples on the part of beaten insurgents in using it. While he was protected by his Government he had his hand deep in the treasury. He had hurraed for the Union, and prayed for the Southern rebels to hold their forts until he secured a fortune.

It required but a season or two for Bellaire and the surrounding farms to put on that staid, respectable air incident to nothing in the world in the same degree as a well kept, judiciously cultivated agricultural district.

As to Westlake, he felt keenly the prejudice against

him, but being brother-in-law to Colonel Fairfax smoothed the way for him more than he liked to acknowledge. He fancied he had great adaptability. He wanted the credit of winning his own way. He was not averse to being welcomed as a man of wealth, but he wished more than anything else to be considered a man of tact and fine instincts. He studied Southern dialect and tricks of speech. He would have liked to be mistaken for a genuine son of the South. Since this was impossible with the natives, he contented himself with assuming a vast cosmopolitanism. He professed to feel at home anywhere. All parts of the world were the same to him. He was very grateful to his sister and to fate that he had such respectable relations. He gazed on the extent of Fairfax Farms with the most beatific satisfaction. He walked through the big rooms with the air of a king. It was all so much finer than anything he had ever dreamed of for his pretty sister. He liked to feel that his own sudden wealth would be shorn of half its glitter by this alliance with a family that had always been respectable.

It was a morning or two after his arrival that he was walking about the lawns and gardens with Mrs. Fairfax, after declining to accompany the Colonel to Bellaire. They had strolled down the beech path and sat on a rustic settee in plain view of the ruin. Naturally he asked its history, and was told the story of Jasper's aunt, and the beautiful fraud who was to have been his wife.

"But, why in the world," he asked, "doesn't the Colonel have these walls taken down? They're a blot. This stone could be utilized about the farm."

"I know that, but, there's no use of saying one word. I think that Jasper feels that in a degree he is responsible for the death of the girl. Of course he couldn't marry her after knowing of her mixed blood."

"That's all bosh. I wish some of my forbears had married a "coon" and put a little color in my make-up."

"Why George! I wouldn't take a fortune for my coloring, just as it is."

"No, I suppose not, since it secured a fortune for you. It's all very well for you, and for Zoe, but if you ever have a son I hope he'll be more like the Colonel."

"I hope so too. But about those walls and chimnies: I wanted them taken down when I first came here, and such a letter as I had from Jasper, and we only married a few months! Since he came home I've mentioned it twice. The first time he played it was a joke, but the second time he declared if I insisted on having the walls torn down, he'd take me to Bellaire to live where I need never see them. I never saw him in quite such a mood. You see, I don't mind the look of the ruin so much as I do the effect it has on the servants. It keeps them in a constant state of excitement. They're continually recalling times of happenings in the Redfield family, and showing reasons why the ghosts should walk on certain nights. Then they hear screams and groans, and see flitting shapes. Their theory is that Salome and her uncle were so incensed at the idea of her being thrown over after the death of her father that they deliberately set fire to the powder and sacrificed

themselves rather than that this highly educated, beautiful Salome should submit to slavery."

"That was rather rough on the girl. Under the circumstances seems to me the Colonel ought to have married her. Mixed blood is awfully common in the South."

"It's common wherever the two races are. Look at the colored people in Madison. You know that amongst the few hundreds there you'll find all shades from coal black to sheepskin gray. Miscegenation is not an exclusively Southern vice."

"Well dear me! You're only a Southerner by marriage, but you're as good a rebel as anybody. By the way; did you ever know what became of Jack Saunders?"

"Sh! No. I'd like to know too, just for my own satisfaction. I wouldn't like very well for him to present himself here looking for me and a chance to invest a fortune," and Mrs. Fairfax laughed while her face reddened.

"Oh no danger. Poor devil was killed in the first day's fight in the Wilderness. Some of his things, a scrap of his hair, his cap, some buttons, a ring and some letters were sent to his mother. She showed them to me when I was in Madison. She never had the least idea who sent them. There was a scrawl on a leaf from a note-book, saying the things were taken from a dead soldier, and as the letters identified him, they were sent. The note was signed, 'A Confederate Soldier'."

"Poor Jack! But, I'm afraid we wouldn't have been happy together."

"It's just as well to say that now. Did he know of your marriage?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. He had a photograph of mine that I'd like to know of. Did Mrs. Saunders mention it?"

"No. How about letters?"

"I had written very few, and those might have been to my grandfather. You know how cranky papa was about such things. Of course he didn't know that Jack had my photograph."

"Well you and the Colonel have both had your little affairs of the heart; but, as the principal witnesses against you are dead, I guess the future is safe enough."

"Jasper had a more serious affair than that of Salome. You remember the Adelaide Francis I told you of meeting the summer when I was in the Adirondacks, where I first met Jasper and his aunt and Salome?"

"Yes."

"Well she and Jasper were married in Washington in the early part of the next year after the tragedy here," waving her hand toward the ruin.

"They lived together only a few weeks, quarreled on the state of the country and soon after the fall of Fort Sumter they separated."

"The devil! Why that must have been only about a year before you and he were married."

"Just about a year, or less. Well, about half an hour before the time for our marriage ceremony, he received a week old letter from Adelaide's father, announcing the birth of a baby—a boy."

"By Gosh! And he told you of it?"

"Of course. Jasper wouldn't deceive me."

"He needn't deceive you, he could simply keep his mouth shut."

"He wouldn't even seem to deceive me."

"I'm afraid that cub may put Zoe's nose out of joint."

"Oh, I think not. I asked him, at the time what he meant to do about it, and he said he didn't feel called upon to do anything. He said the quarrel had not been of a personal nature at all. That by the terms of the divorce both were absolutely free, and that Adelaide had said she would resume her maiden name; and there was no least hint that a child was expected. I don't believe he has ever heard from any of the Francis family since."

"And you've never mentioned the matter to him since?"

"Oh no! You see I've seen so little of him since we've been married; and of course I couldn't write him about it."

"Probably it's best to keep still. Wait until something brings the subject up. That youngster must be about three years old."

"Yes, over three since February. How much I'd like to see him!"

"Well, pray the Lord you never may, and pray too for a son of your own. I tell you, these Southern fellows have great ideas of holding their realty in one name for ages; like the nobility of Europe."

"Jasper has some distant relations in England, all the relations he knows anything about, by the way, and they've a title. It seems the two brothers who came to the colonies were younger sons, or cousins

or something of Lord Treslyn whose family name was and is, Fairfax."

"It would be a fine trick of fortune if the Colonel should inherit an English title."

"But he won't. Several years ago he visited Treslyn Castle and was entertained most splendidly. The family consisted of Lord Treslyn, only about sixty years old, his son Leigh Fairfax probably a dozen years older than Jasper, and at that time he had four children. Two boys and two girls."

"Not much chance then for our Kentuckian. Lucky for him he doesn't need this English wealth."

"Oh yes, he'd never live in England. No man was ever prouder of his nationality than Jasper is."

After a pause Westlake remarked:

"I believe, Marcia that ruin is rather picturesque, both to look at and to think about. It's romantic. In a way it's a monument to the girl. Even the ghosts give an air of aristocracy to the place."

"I think some of the ghosts the darkies have seen and heard were very much alive people, searching for Salome's diamonds."

"What! Was she the owner of diamonds?"

"Oh my yes! Sheba has told me of bracelets and necklaces and hair ornaments and brooches and rings without end. So has Mrs. Simmons. The Simmons people have lived here for thirty years. Ceely, who used to be Salome's maid has talked by the hour about her jewelry. Her father had quite a collection of uncut jewels that he left her in his will. Not one of these has ever been found. Mrs. Simmons has told me that she and her husband, their daughter and son-in-law have spent hours and hours digging in the

rubbish. They think that Salome and Victor secreted the jewels somewhere, intending to carry them away, but, an accident with a match or a candle fired the powder and they perished."

"Well, well! fine chance for detective work whether the fortune was ever found or not. I must take a look at the place. Lord! all sorts of mischief, like counterfeiting, unlawful distilling or secreting stolen goods might be carried on there. I suppose there's a cellar?"

"Oh yes, under the whole house. Many of the floors over the cellars were lined with stone laid in cement."

"H'm; people don't build that way nowadays."

Westlake clasped his hands behind his head and dropping his hat he leaned back and stared at the gray walls, half covered with ivy. Mrs. Fairfax said something about returning to the house. It was nearly time for lunch; Jasper might be at home and she must see if Zoe was being cared for.

Westlake yawned: "But this kid of the Colonel's first wife,—where is he supposed to live?"

"In Washington. He was born there. You see Senator Francis was a Unionist, and he lost caste to such a degree that after a few months of the war, he never dared to show himself in Lexington. They say his house there was ruined by a mob of his friends who had voted him into Congress several terms."

"Good enough for him. But you just keep your eyes open about that boy. If Fairfax happens to have an errand to Washington or anywhere else, you go with him. Your predecessor may not live in Washington now."

"Why George, I don't believe Jasper would deceive me. If he's doing anything for Adelaide and her child, or if he wanted to go and see them, I'm sure he'd tell me."

"Don't fool yourself. He wouldn't want to have a row, and you're no woman if you wouldn't object to him keeping tab on Adelaide and her boy. Just keep your eyes open. If you discover nothing, all right. If you find that you and Zoe have each a rival, you'll be partially prepared for them."

CHAPTER XIII.

Before this conversation with her brother, Mrs. Fairfax had often reviewed the events that had led up to her short courtship and sudden marriage. That her husband loved her she did not doubt. Sometimes when she lifted her eyes and found his own fixed upon her with a dreamy, half smiling expression she was pleased to believe that he was glad of the wreck of his first marriage. Then her cheeks grew pink, and a wonder stole into her heart. Was she so delicately pretty as to rival even beautiful Adelaide Francis? In the days they had passed together in the mountains when he was Salome's debonair lover, she had said to herself over and over that he was the handsomest, most polished, most agreeable man she ever saw. In those days, if her own heart had given her the slightest hint that she would ever be his wife she would have said "no, I'll go to the moon instead, and marry the man who lives there. That's more probable."

In the most unprecedented way two beautiful women were set aside by fate, and she, the least attractive of the three, was ruler of this man's home and heart. Ah, that last! Was it so? Did he grieve for Salome with her velvety eyes and wonderful tawny hair? Was the ruined home where she grew and unfolded into such beautiful womanhood a monument to her loss, a continual reminder to him of what might have been? Perhaps; but, that other

—the woman who had been his wife—who was the mother of his son. Ah! regret for a dead sweetheart is a harmless, fading sorrow. Longing for a living woman and her son, his son—

George must be right. In this train of thought was one that threw into shame her hasty marriage. How fickle Jasper must be! How soon after Salome's death he had married Adelaide! How soon after his divorce from Adelaide had he married her! How soon would he have another fancy?

She wondered she had never thought of it before. What if he had been deceiving her for—ever so long! When he was wounded and a prisoner, how could she know that he was not passing the time with Adelaide. Twice before he had been wounded, but escaped capture, and, came home. How foolish and trusting and romantic she had grown since she had been separated from her father and brother. Now she would follow George's advice to the letter. In the spirit, she must, as she was thoroughly imbued with suspicion.

The brother's advice was iterated and reiterated. The two were never alone together for half an hour that Colonel Fairfax's first wife and their son were not mentioned. In justice be it recorded that it was always Westlake who opened the subject, sometimes carelessly, inadvertently, oftener seriously.

Mrs. Fairfax watched her husband most zealously. She did this, usually, with a pretty air of devotion that would appeal to the heart of any man, were he the recipient of the attention or only a spectator. When the banking business was in course of organization and Fairfax drove to Bellaire early every morn-

ing, he was surprised that his wife found errands each morning to take her also to the village. He was still more surprised when she drove to the bank for him each evening. He told her it was very kind and pleasant of her to thus constitute herself his coachman, but, she must not inconvenience herself. She must not sacrifice too much of her time to please him.

Had she not many, many things to do? He thought women always had a whole world of sewing. Then there was the house to keep. She, being a thrifty Northern woman would certainly manage the servants more rigidly than would a woman of the South.

Sometimes to this playful banter, Mrs. Fairfax would answer with a sly little caress that could be given even on the street, and with entire impunity within the business rooms of the bank.

At other times, with a pretty assumption of willfulness she declared she would willingly neglect anything in the world but her baby, for the sake of his society. Then, sometimes, as will happen to the most tactful of women, her nerves would be in rebellion. She would not know that she had overtaxed herself until her husband's good-natured remonstrances gave her the sensation of receiving a mouth-full of acid when she had expected a candied violet. At these times there was a dash of tears and a collapse into the nearest chair, and a sobbing avowal that she would stay at home forever if he wished it. If he was weary of her society, she would deny herself of the supreme pleasure of her life.

What could a man who had a high regard for his wife, and an ideal sense of his great obligations to her, do in a case like that? Just what Jasper Fairfax did:

Pet and caress her, kiss away her tears, wonder how such a barbarian as himself ever did happen to be so fortunate as to gain possession of the sweetest wife in the world, and declare he would barter the universe for one moment of her precious presence.

While the banking organization was still incomplete, Fairfax said one evening at dinner, that it would probably be better for him to go to Washington to arrange a certain preliminary than to depend on correspondence.

Westlake gave his sister a quick glance from under half-closed eye-lids. She at once took her cue, exclaiming:

"Oh that will be delightful! I haven't been in Washington since Lincoln's first inaugural."

Fairfax looked surprised and serious. "I shall be very much hurried; I'll not be able to spare the time for going about with you."

"I won't mind that. I've been cooped up here so long! I want a breath of strange air."

"How about your wardrobe?"

"I have enough to travel in, and I'll do some shopping there. A Southern woman must not dress too well now."

So the trip was made, and upon their return Fairfax wondered what it was that had wearied him so utterly. If he had had no time for going about with his wife she bridged over the difficulty by appropriating all the time the sun measured for going about with him. He reminded her of her shopping. She had decided to make no purchases. He was afraid she was weary in the middle of the day; would she not better rest a while? She assured him she was as fresh as when

she left home. At each least hint from him that there might be something else than going about with him well worth the doing, she grew more determined to keep him in her sight.

So thoroughly had she become imbued with the idea that his real business in Washington was to visit Adelaide Francis, and the affair of the bank but a pretext, that she grew crabbed and sulky before the evening of the one day they were to pass in the city. It had been arranged that they should start for home on this evening, so as to economize time; but when Fairfax saw the frown in the eyes of his wife, he said, "No, dear, you must rest to-night. You are utterly worn out. We'll start for home to-morrow morning."

Then her thought was: "He's determined to see her and the child. Well; he'll not get out of my sight this night."

After dinner Fairfax said: "Now dear, lie on this couch and rest. I'll go to the office and have a smoke."

"No, smoke here. I'll be lonely if you go away. Stay here or I'll follow you."

"Very well then; only lie down. I think you have no idea of your weariness."

She knew she was tired, but she did not know how exceedingly tiresome she was making herself to her husband. Nor did he know it. Her watchfulness, her uneasiness, her over-exertion had so fatigued her that she was on the verge of hysteria.

On retiring for the night, she said: "Don't close the door between our rooms. I feel half afraid."

"No indeed. I believe you'd better have something quieting, wouldn't you? A trifle of valerian?"

"Oh no! no! Valerian is dreadful for the nerves. No, I need nothing.

"Nothing but rest, and I hope you'll have it."

He kissed her cheek, her eyes, her forehead and left her. Her thought, with a scornful drawing down of the corners of her mouth: "Yes; I'll rest when I get you out of this city. Valerian! Put me soundly to sleep and leave you free to wander away wherever you please! Well, I guess not."

She guessed rightly. Her state of mind, more than her weariness of body kept her awake until the gray of the morning. All night long she watched to see her husband rise from his bed, dress himself carefully, be all ready to leave the room slyly, and then!—

But all night long she heard his regular breathing as he slept. Once he stirred and she was on the alert. He sighed softly, then,—what was that he was saying? She leaned far out of her bed to listen. She heard a soft "ha ha," and then, "Papa's—darling—baby—Zoe!"

She cowered back in her bed, her cheeks burning. What if she were wronging him after all? But, men were notoriously false; why should her husband be better than others? Considering his peculiar circumstances what might not happen? She would continue to be guided by George's advice. She would see to it that no one concerned in that domestic tragedy should steal a march upon her.

The morning found her pale as a ghost, without appetite and irritable almost beyond endurance. Fairfax was astonished and anxious. Their breakfast was served in their own parlor. He would have called a physician. He said they would not leave Washing-

ton until she was feeling better; but she was positive in expressing her wish to go at once. She could rest on the train. She would not delay him for the world.

So they started westward and Fairfax wondered more and more. The city was hardly lost behind them before his wife grew listless, drowsy, and leaning her head on his shoulder slept soundly for hours.

"She's a poor traveller," he thought. "Who'd have dreamed that the excitement of a little jaunt like this would so completely use her up? How she has clung to me every moment of the time! Poor girl! She must go from home oftener. She's losing all her spirit and brightness."

When home was reached and Mrs. Fairfax, absorbed in Sheba's account of Zoe's doings during her absence left her husband to go to their rooms alone, he threw himself on a wicker couch and closed his eyes with the sensation as of dropping a great burden. What the burden was he did not inquire. He had no conception of the true state of the case. He told Sheba he was very glad to be at home again. Home was the best place in the world. He played with Zoe, admiring her delicate beauty and her pretty frock, and after dinner he walked about the lawn with her in his arms. He listened to her little broken words with the greatest attention, and, by and by when Mrs. Fairfax sauntered down the walk and joined them he said:

"Marcia, did you ever hear any great singer, or any cunning musical instrument make sounds one half as sweet as this wee one's prattle?"

The mother made no direct answer. She trifled

with baby's flaxen curls and made baby talk to her while she wondered, even then, if her husband had not in his mind—that other child, that son of his.

Of her own accord she had laid aside womanly trust that should have clothed her like a complete garment. Of her own accord she had donned the robe of Nessus, and there was no rest nor comfort for her under the sun.

CHAPTER XIV.

In all the wide circle of their acquaintances, Jasper Fairfax and his wife were considered a most congenial pair. They were always together excepting the few business hours in the middle of the day. On Sunday morning, with Zoe in her cab, they would saunter down the beech avenue, past the ruin, then along the shady highway to the little gray stone church. Sometimes they drove to Bellaire for service, but not often.

Through the week if Mrs. Fairfax did not accompany her husband to his business in the morning and drive him home in the evening there was an earnest look at her brother and a laughing charge, "Take care of your brother, George."

There were playful commands, too that, coming frequently, ceased to be pleasant. The gist of these commands was, "Be sure to hurry home after banking hours. Let there be no loitering on the streets at the very time when all the pretty girls are out."

Sometimes Fairfax would ask: "Do you think so poorly of yourself that you are in constant fear of a rival? I never dream of watching you. I'm sure you think me the best and prettiest boy in the world."

Then there were laughter and protestations that that was the very reason why she was watchful. All the girls and women praised him; while no man but himself admired her. She invariably searched his pockets, declaring openly that she meant to discover any secret correspondence he might be carrying on,

To this Fairfax answered that whenever he wished to maintain a clandestine correspondence, so very secret that she must not know of it he would invent a most intricate cypher system, or probably use only business terms, and hand the letters to her to read. They would be quite safe, as she confessed that business talk was unmeaning jargon to her.

From the impetus given her latent jealousy and self-depreciation by her brother's influence, Mrs. Fairfax, though naturally trusting and credulous, grew to find this constant watch upon her husband, the one object of her life. She was truer to blood than she was to conjugality. From suspecting her husband of a lingering fondness for his first wife and her child, and a clandestine knowledge of them, she grew to fancying he might be entangled in any number of intrigues, more or less serious, or, he would be if she gave the opportunity.

"Think of it;" she said to Westlake; "there was the breaking of his engagement with Salome and her tragic death, but he was married to Adelaide Francis before the year was out. They quarreled and separated and he and I were married within less than a year from his first wedding day."

Westlake laughed. "He is not false but fickle. Why didn't you think of that when he asked you to marry?"

"Because I was in so much trouble about papa and you."

"Just so; and a generous, big hearted man falls in love with you, or he's doing a fair job of make-believe, and marries you to protect you. You accept without a 'thank you,' and now you question his every-

day behaviour, thinking that because he married you hastily there must be something wrong."

"It seems to me, now that I've had time to think it over I was very foolish."

"I tell you the circumstances justified it all, on both sides, and I think the Colonel gave you first-class proof of his regard for you."

"Oh, of course, men always justify themselves and each other for following an impulse where women are concerned. If he should take a fancy to some other woman, I don't believe he'd consider me for a moment. He'd find some fine, honorable excuse for ridding himself of me, or keeping me in ignorance."

"But, Marcia, I'm sure the Colonel's as kind to you as he possibly can be."

"He's kind to everybody. Politeness is the foundation of his character."

"Yes, I know, he's a thorough-bred; and you're drawing the reins too hard. I think he's true as steel to you. Of course, if that boy of Adelaide's lives, he may bob up some day and make trouble, but I don't believe the Colonel ever hears anything of him now."

"He might hear of him a dozen times without telling you or me."

"Yes, that's so but there's no use of fretting about it until you know. All you can do is to keep your eyes open; and, don't be cranky; don't nag."

This was good advice but, probably Frankenstein had his advisers too. The monster he created and failed to control was not to be compared, in his capacity for evil with the monster of Jealousy that George Westlake had awakened in his sister's mind.

When a woman sets herself such a task as had Mar-

cia Fairfax, by what standard is she to gauge anything she sees? She purposely distorts her vision, then sits in judgment on the world.

She sees trifles that, left alone, would float away like a plume of vapor, but, encouraged and magnified by her diseased imagination assume the proportion and portent of a river of lava. The 'good-morning' of a friend means, "how sad and tragic it is that we must ever say good-morning or good-night." She grew querulous, exacting, tyrannical.

Fairfax, watching this strange and unpleasant development of her character, wondered, philosophized, endured. He first believed her health was breaking, and prescribed change of air; but she refused, absolutely to leave home without him. Frequently, then, he went away with her, north in the summer, south in the winter, anywhere she chose, but there was no change of behaviour. True she insisted she was not ill and her whole appearance corroborated her words. She was fragile and delicate of figure, but yet of girlish roundness and grace. She carried her years so easily, she was often mistaken for the careful elder sister of her daughter.

When the family was not away from home, Fairfax encouraged his wife to fill the house with guests. She must have something to distract her thoughts, to prevent her from growing morbid. But, though she was a most gracious and delightful hostess, she was never so absorbed but that she might watch her husband, and from watching to suspecting and reproaching was but a breath.

Fairfax reviewed the situation many times. When he at last recognized and acknowledged the blemish

in the character of his wife, he told himself that he had been very much mistaken in her. He had supposed she was a very trusting and unselfish woman. In all fairness he thought that under the circumstances there was some reason for her distrust. Out of his own behaviour since their first acquaintance had this distrust grown. So as he came to this conclusion late one night, he rose from where he was sitting in his dressing room, stole in to his wife's room and lightly kissed her as she slept. "My sins be upon my own head. The fanning of a butter-fly's wings don't hurt. I shall be patience personified, pretty one."

And yet, there was her behaviour towards Sheba when he first brought her home. She had resented the nurse's attentions to him, and had raised a barrier of reserve between herself and the rest of the servants. This he had explained to the blacks and also to himself, as the cropping out of Northern prejudice. In a measure that was right. Now, after a dozen years, this feeling was gone. Sheba or any of the servants might come and go as they pleased. They were as necessary to her comfort as they were to his own. But, he knew that much of her treatment of the slaves in those first days, was prompted by the same feeling that urged her now and always to claim every moment of his time that was not filled with business.

She was aggressive in asserting her exclusive right to him. She owned him. No one else had the shadow of a claim to one glance, one word, without her sanction. The wives and daughters of old friends must not be too cordial in their manners to the owner of Fairfax Farms, if they did not wish to provoke a breath of frigidity from his wife. Not that any one

suspected jealousy, but women learned, instinctively that Mrs. Fairfax had very rigid ideas on some matters, and good humoredly thought no further. What would have been the surprise of these neighbors and of Jasper Fairfax himself, could they or he have read the thoughts of the pretty, graceful Northern woman as she sat in her drawing room gazing on the pictured face of her husband's mother and complacently acknowledging the goodness of Providence in removing her!

Sometimes Fairfax thought that if more children had come to them the mind and character of his wife would have broadened with her cares; but, the years went by, Zoe was a beautiful, slender girl of ten, and no younger ones to call her sister.

The political whirligig, after many erratic gyrations, had again spun John Cogswell into Congress. The last season he and his wife had in Washington, was when their two daughters were society girls. Now they were married with children old enough to be left in school, while they made plans for a gay month with their father and mother.

Mrs. Cogswell said she was sure she should find Washington very much changed. She knew too that she would feel lonely. So she must have a full house. She would invite others besides her daughters and their husbands. Amongst these others were the Fairfax husband and wife and brother Westlake.

When the invitation was given, Mrs. Fairfax insisted that her husband's business would probably prevent him from leaving home.

"Oh bother the business!" from Senator Cogswell. "Doesn't he go other places? That bank

can run itself. I tell you, Mrs. Fairfax, Jasper has so got hold of the people of Bellaire and here-about, I actually believe he could walk out of that bank any day and leave the safes and vaults wide open, and there isn't a person in the county who knows 'im but would constitute himself a guard of honor, and protect the bank with his life if necessary."

"That's true, every word of it," assented Mrs. Cogswell, while Fairfax laughed and shook his head deprecatingly at his old friends. He was well accustomed to their kindly flatteries. Nobody in the world knew him better.

Mrs. Fairfax said primly: "Then there is every reason why he should not abuse the confidence of his friends."

Westlake remarked lazily: "Of course the business would be all right. The men, with one or two exceptions, have been with the concern ever since it started. Seems to me Marcia that it might be pleasanter for us to see something of busy life, once in a way, instead of loafing in Florida, or seeing the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. You haven't been in Washington since Zoe was a baby, and she's ten years old, isn't she?" and he looked steadily at his sister.

"Yes, she's ten. Well, of course, Jasper says not a word, whether he wants to go or not," and she put on a look of patient endurance.

"I leave it all to you, my dear. Your word is law in this house. There's not the least difficulty in leaving the business. If you say we'll accept Mrs. Cogswell's kind invitation, there's nothing more to be said by any one. If you say no, why then the vote is unanimous."

Mrs. Fairfax's face reddened. Her thought was that this ready acquiescence only proved how entirely she was ignored in the hidden part of her husband's life. It was not necessary to his happiness or comfort that they should go to Washington. No doubt he was in constant communication with Adelaide and her son. It would not be so much more to be in the same city with them, as she had proved on one occasion. Urged by her brother's remark, and the telegraphy of his eyes, and knowing he would explain fully when they were alone together, she very gracefully accepted the invitation. Then she talked so well of the duties of wives in regard to the best interest of their husbands, that Senator Cogswell was quite charmed with her.

Westlake grinned broadly and said to himself what a consummate actress Marcia was growing. Later, to her questions as to why he approved of a visit to Washington he explained that for want of something tangible on which to nourish her suspicions she was growing visionary and cranky. There was nothing in her husband's life from day to day of which the most exacting woman could complain; but, she was allowing her mind to wander from this first wife and the possibilities of harm through her son to the merest trifles concerning other women. Because of this remote, but quite possible rival, she was making of herself a veritable octopus with tentacles that drew in and destroyed every joy and comfort in life. She was worse than the darkies with their ghost stories.

So she would better go to Washington for a few weeks; and if she could be satisfied in no other way, look up Adelaide. They had known each other, and

she could make the meeting seem accidental. If she used tact she could discover if the separation, born of the bitterness of party feeling, in the first days of the war had ever been bridged over. Better still, she might make the acquaintance of the boy and find out how much he knew of his father.

Though Mrs. Fairfax could not tolerate the thought of deliberately meeting her predecessor, yet she felt an overwhelming curiosity to see her. She was more than curious to see the child. Adelaide Francis was the most beautiful girl she had ever seen. She was simply perfect in face, form and manner. If the boy resembled her, how handsome he must be! If he was like his father—ah! She felt that to see him would break her heart. Little Zoe was a lovely child, but showed no least resemblance to her father. Mrs. Fairfax brooded over this until it became a very real pain to her. She felt that she was being tricked by fate. If this one daughter had been a Fairfax, or if she had had other children she might have been more secure. As matters were, what might not happen?

CHAPTER XV.

Mrs. Fairfax was a woman of system. She could not abide hurry and confusion. It was within a few days of the time for going to Washington and her preparations were complete. There was ample time for seeing that everything was in order about the house. There was great satisfaction in knowing there would be no worry at the last minute. There was time too to pay all social debts in the way of calls. She liked to feel, that after a short absence her house was the Mecca of all her friends. At these times she felt herself the social center of her little world.

It was to pay off a few calls that she drove into Bellaire one morning with her husband. She lunched with a party convened in her honor, and went home late in the afternoon. She was tired and she called Ceely to brush her hair and make her comfortable for a nap. As the girl was putting an afghan over her mistress she felt something under her foot. Stooping she picked up a letter, and with the remark that she "reckoned it b'longed to Mas' Jaspas," she laid it on a table and went away.

No sooner was she gone than Mrs. Fairfax, rising on her elbow reached the letter. It was directed to Colonel Jasper Fairfax, and bore the Washington post mark. It had been opened, and, no doubt the owner had dropped it that morning or the evening before, as it was of recent date. She knew the hand at once. It was from Senator Cogswell; but why had

Jasper been silent about it? She had not been aware of any correspondence between them. However, she had no hesitancy in reading the letter. The first paragraph or two were pleasant reminders of their coming visit, and wondered why they could not have made the journey with "the girls," Mrs. Jerome and Mrs. Dorne. Their rooms were in readiness, and the whole house would welcome them. Then, and Mrs. Fairfax felt sure that it was this that had prompted the letter: "The other day I was quite startled. I needed a page to carry a message, and I beckoned a little fellow who loitered not far away. He came and I could not make out where I had seen him before. I seemed to be looking into a face I had known long ago and half forgotten, and, I couldn't name him. I kept the youngster waiting as long as I could, while I cudgelled my dusty old brains. When I could invent no more excuses, to detain him, I said, 'Well young man I like your looks. Tell me your name, so that we may be even. You seem to know mine.' The answer was, *Jasper Fairfax*. Then the mists cleared away. He looks like you. For an instant my mind was full of visions of lawless natural selection and stolen sweets; then I remembered your ill-fated marriage. To find if I was guessing rightly I said, 'Dear me! I believe I know your grandfather Francis.' His answer was, and with his Dad's own decided manner: 'I hope so; Grandpa's a Kentuckian. He and Mama and I live together.' I've cultivated the boy's acquaintance. He's the trimmest little figure in his page's uniform; and altogether as fine a little fellow as you'd care to see. As like you,, too!—what a thousand pities it is—but, there— you

have a lovely, affectionate wife and a charming little daughter. Young Jasper has invited me to call on his grandfather. I reckon I'll go and see the damned old renegade sometime, and shake hands across the chasm."

Mrs. Fairfax was in a tempest of emotions. After all her watchfulness, this came without warning and found her unprepared. She could not say that it had not come to her husband in the same way. In one breath she blamed him for not showing her the letter; in the next she acknowledged that it would have been in exceeding bad taste for him to have done so. All the afternoon she writhed under the lashings of her own thoughts until she was in a state bordering on hysteria.

As the time drew near for her husband's home coming, she changed her mind fifty times in regard to her line of action. She never dreamed of silence, of placing the letter somewhere about the rooms where he would find it without knowing it had been in her hands. Her indecision was all as to the manner of approaching him about this description of Adelaide's son, and his reasons for not even telling her he had had a letter from Cogswell.

At last she decided she would be dressed, calm herself as well as she could, and, after dinner have, as she said, an explanation. At least she would hear what he had to say, and see how he would say it.

As soon as Fairfax saw his wife he knew there was something wrong. He asked her if she was ill, or tired, and without looking up she said no. She was carefully dressed, but her face was quite colorless save the dark circles below her eyes. Her hands trembled,

so did her voice. However, she talked very little, and her manner had a subduing effect on the family. When she raised her eyes, it was quite trying to find her husband watching her with the most decorous and affectionate concern.

As soon as dinner was over she started for the stairs, saying, "Jasper I wish to see you for a minute as soon as convenient."

His answer was a quick rising from his chair, passing his arm about her, and, "Certainly dear, let me help you;" and together they went away.

Westlake was mystified. He could not imagine what had happened. That his sister was really ill he did not for one moment believe; but that she had made a discovery he was certain. It must be pretty serious too, that she must have it out with the Colonel before consulting him.

Zoe remained in the parlor with her uncle. He asked her how long mama had been ill.

The answer was, "Oh, all day perhaps. I had my lessons and Miss Gertrude doesn't give me one minute to call my own. I saw mama go away this morning, and then I saw her this evening at dinner. She'll be well to-morrow."

Above stairs more lucid explanations were in progress. As soon as the husband and wife had reached the cozy little parlor that was for them alone, Mrs. Fairfax sank into a chair that stood near a cabinet and, opening a drawer she handed out the letter.

"I guess you must have dropped this," she said icily.

Fairfax took it without the least change of count-

enance that his wife could detect. He barely looked at it and laid it down.

"Oh Cogswell's letter. Yes; I had not missed it."

Then, as if remembering the contents, he dropped on one knee beside her chair and clasped her in his arms.

"My darling! how sorry I am that this gossiping letter fell into your hands. It isn't possible that it is making you ill?"

"How would you like to find a description of a child of mine, or even to know that I had a child that was not yours?" and she half pushed him from her.

"Why, my dear," and Fairfax laughed as he rose from the floor and drew a chair close beside her: "if you had a child that was not mine, and under the same circumstances that this boy bears my name, I think here would be no need of a written description of it. It would be living here with its mother."

"No doubt you expect me to take my cue and say your son ought to live here with his father."

"Marcia! I told you the whole truth of the matter on the one occasion we spoke of it. Since then I have made my reckoning in life without one thought of my first wife and the child I have heard of, this," touching the letter "is the second time."

"You can make very light of it, only supposing our positions reversed. If it were real I fancy you would know my feelings, at least you would if you loved me."

"Why Marcia, you knew all about my first marriage and all the trouble before you and I ever dreamed of marrying each other. Then while there was yet time for you to break our short engagement,

I told you of this child. I told you within less than thirty minutes after I knew it myself. I don't see that you have the least reason for any feeling in the matter."

"Of course you don't see. What right has any man to have two families?"

"No right at all. I have not two families. When I married you I had no wife, no child. The law had made me as free as you were. Since then I've been as true as the sun to you. Adelaide was my wife. I am sure, on our wedding day, we both had the very best intentions. But, we quarrelled. It was a part of the great quarrel of the age;—the quarrel that cost rivers of blood and filled the country with widows and orphans."

"Add to that, the quarrel that Jasper Fairfax is still regretting, because of his lost love, Adelaide;" and Mrs. Fairfax smiled scornfully.

"Marcia, my wife, that is unjust. I have you and Zoe. If you think a man can go through such an experience as I did with Adelaide and not suffer, then,—well, may be a woman could. I don't know,—I only speak for myself. But, tell me this, Marcia: Have I ever given you cause to believe that I regret Adelaide?"

"Not openly."

"Then not at all. My life has been to you an open book. I'd scorn to deceive you in any matter, great or small."

"Do you tell me that you have never seen Adelaide, never heard from her since your separation?"

"No, I tell you no such thing."

"I thought so, I thought so; I'll get the truth if I

probe for it," and Mrs. Fairfax laughed while her eyes blazed.

"Now kindly tell me," she continued, "how often you hear from her, and when and where you saw her last."

"You shall have the truth and all the truth, and that too without using your probe with unnecessary brutality. This letter of Cogswell's I suppose may be said to be news of Adelaide; so was the letter from her father announcing the birth of the child. You have seen both. There, don't interrupt. The other question: Where did I see her last I could have answered at any time since Meade's men made me a prisoner on the Rappahannock. But, in my ethics of good taste between husband and wife I refrained from mentioning this occurrence."

"Your taste is not the point in question. I have no special liking for many things, but I want to know once for all, upon exactly what footing I stand in regard to the other Mrs. Fairfax. So, if you are equal to it, if you are ready to confess—"

"I am quite ready to confess, and I sincerely hope you will not be shocked. I saw—the other Mrs. Fairfax—oh, you set the example," and he showed his teeth in a tigerish grin that was new to his wife, as she lifted her clinched hands, "and the name is hers. I saw her with a party of surgeons and army nurses from where I lay, grievously wounded and a prisoner. My wounds had been dressed by two Federal surgeons, one an old Harvard chum, who recognized me. They thought I was done for, and I was left lying, for the sake of air, near the opening of the tent, or hut or whatever it was that served as a

hospital. Lying there I saw the surgeons and nurses. The fight was still on, and it was sundown. The nurses were anxious to go forward. Between the thunders of the artillery and the charges of the cavalry, they and I could hear the cries and groans of the wounded and dying. Half dazed as I was, through loss of blood, I yet recognized Adelaide and Fanny Seton, another Washington society girl in their nurse's uniform.

"Several times the group of helpers started forward only to be turned back by an aide. At last Adelaide, picking up a twig that had been cut from a tree, and tying her handkerchief to it, started away towards the clouds of smoke and stench of blood, in opposition to the whole party. I heard her say: "I cannot bear it;—I can better die with the poor soldiers!" She carried her little flag of truce, and I, more dead than alive fancied for a moment that an odor of white roses was blown from it across my face."

Mrs. Fairfax sat listening, so absorbed that she was barely conscious of the far-away look in her husband's eyes. He continued:

"In the other hand she had a full basket."

"Well, of course she was sent back?"

"No, she was not. That night was a long one for me, and, when I had strength enough to think, I thought it would be my last. I slept and waked and knew that Dick Hall was with me several times. I knew when he hung up a curtain or blanket to shut out the cold. After some time, a nurse came and took the blanket down, and it was in the gray of morning. Then I saw a figure, at first it seemed

only a wavering shadow, a little denser than the gray mist, coming up the slope. But the shadow grew to be a woman with a basket. She entered at the other door of the long compartment of tents and dropped into a chair where I could see her face. It was white and old. I heard Fanny Seton exclaim: "Oh Adelaide! we were sure you were lost, taken prisoner, or killed!" 'Killed Fanny? Oh I was never alive before in my life! Look at all these things! taken from the poor boys! They must every one be sent home. Here is my book full of messages. Many of the wounded are being cared for, many poor boys need no care!'

"She had handkerchiefs, photographs, buttons, locks of hair; all the little mementoes that parting lovers exchange, all the things that mother love remembers. Some one brought food, but there sat Adelaide, writing out the messages, folding parcels that were to carry hope into some homes, shut out the blessed light from others. More than once her hands, coming in contact with her dress left a red stain on parcel or letter. I watched her as she sat there, pale, heavy-eyed, her hair braided smoothly, compactly, her dark woollen gown so soiled one could barely recognize the material. She seemed the pitying angel of Peace assuaging as she could, the cruelties of War. I recalled her as I had known her, the gayest, the most sought for in any assemblage. She had always the surplus of partners at the dance; the readiest wit, and the most charming costumes.

"At last her task seemed to be finished. Some one not in sight urged her to go and rest. She answered, 'Yes I've finished.' She rose, and from the bosom of

her dress she drew a little circular leathern case, opened it and pressed it to her lips; then, reeled and fell forward to the ground. The little case closed in falling from her hand and rolled against my pallet."

"Ah! I suppose you had the satisfaction of picking it up and finding your own picture there, and our baby barely a month old at that time;" and Mrs. Fairfax's face was not handsome under the sneer.

Without the slightest change in his voice Fairfax continued: "I did pick up the case, and I did open it. Not honorable I admit, but I'm confessing all my sins in this line. I saw the face of a little child. Whose child it was I needed not to be told. I called one of the nurses and gave it to her, telling her the other nurse had dropped it.

"Now you know of the one time, or the twice that I have seen Adelaide since we ceased to be husband and wife. We quarreled because of the quarrel between the North and the South. There was nothing personal in our disagreement, at least there was not on my side, and if Adelaide found something in me that she could not tolerate, and made my states' rights ideas her cause for a separation, she kept it to herself. She lived up to her principles, I to mine. Now, are you satisfied?"

"I shall never be satisfied. A woman is a fool to marry a divorced man, and a man who has once been married has no right to ask another woman to marry him while his first wife lives."

"You're talking very childishly. You certainly had it in your power to refuse to marry the divorced man. If I had kept you in ignorance, or had in the least tried to deceive you, there might be some reason

for these reproaches after nearly a dozen years. When you and I were married, I was as free to marry, under the law, as if Adelaide had died."

"No matter, she had not died. She was living and is still living, and you've petted and caressed her just as you have me. She was all to you that I have been."

"Well, dear me, Marcia, hadn't I a right to love her? If I had had no impulse to pet and caress her I shouldn't have married her; and please apply that remark to yourself, in whatever degree our years together will justify. Adelaide was my wife, and as you know yourself, one of the loveliest women the good God ever made."

"You sit there and talk to me in that way!" and Mrs. Fairfax sprang from her chair. "Do you think I am made of stone that I can bear it?"

Fairfax kept his seat. Not a muscle of his face showed that he was at all moved.

"No, I am sure you are not made of stone. I know you are flesh and blood. In view of your watchfulness of me all these years, I know you are of the wise flesh and blood that knows the average man and woman are not to be trusted. Still, I would stake my life upon your honor as to the letter of the law."

"What do you mean?" she gasped, her white face working convulsively.

"Wait a minute and I'll tell you."

He left the parlor, entering his own dressing-room. She heard him fit a key, unfold some paper, and then he came in with a card photograph in his hand. It was yellow with age, soiled and stained. He came

and stood by her without touching her, and held the picture for her to see. It was her own. Along the lower margin, written in clear black letters were the words, *Meus Amo*.

"Where—where—did—you—get—it?" she whispered with white lips. She made no effort to take the picture. Her hands hung limp and helpless.

"Where did I get it? Where do you suppose? Where should I get my wife's picture? I took it from under a dead soldier's cheek, pressed there by his one unshattered hand. It was at the battle of the Wilderness. At that time our baby was about six months old. Other things about—Jack Saunders, I sent to his mother in your native town."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Tell you! When I asked you to become my wife you said not a word of a man who carried your picture with an inscription like that. I cannot tell what prompted me to preserve it. By the time I came home I had well-nigh forgotten it. Prax put it away, supposing it really belonged to me. Had it not been for your constant espionage I should have let it pass without a thought. But, you watched me continually. It was months before I understood you. Then I wished I had been as reticent as yourself. But, I had gone a step further than had you and Saunders. The law and the church, and our mutual friends had sanctioned my endearments of Adelaide. You and this man were lovers. I have no doubt but that he has kissed your lips a thousand times. He has compared your eyes to forget-me-nots and closed them with kisses;—"

"Jasper! hush! will you drive me mad?"

"With regret? Don't deny it. Come, this is a two-handed game, and I think honors are easy. As I said before, in the letter of the law, you were a maiden when you became my wife. In your heart you were married to this soldier whose last thought was of you, whose last strength was expended in pressing your picture to his face. You had given to this soldier your word, your caresses. There had been no quarrel, no annulment of vows. The law had bound Adelaide and me, the law set us apart, and we have never met since. When you married me, you knew that Saunders was living. I don't know when, if ever, you knew what had become of him. I doubt if you ever even notified him of your marriage."

Mrs. Fairfax had sunk into her chair, her arms thrown over a table, and her head resting upon them.

"It is not wholly the ring and the word of the priest that makes marriage. These formalities but sanction ties already made. Ceremonials came in with civilization. Marriage, pure and simple is one of nature's first laws. But, there's no use multiplying words. It's foolish and worse than foolish for you to worry yourself into hysteria about this boy of Adelaide's."

"Yours as well. What would I care if she had a dozen children if they were not yours too!"

"True, mine as well, and this is the first time I ever, by spoken word acknowledged the child. I wish never to speak of him again, to you nor to any one. I have no interest in him, no curiosity concerning him. Since my marriage with you, I have lived as if I had never seen Adelaide Francis. Even in my sleep—in my dreams, I have been true to you and our child."

CHAPTER XVI.

Through the long wakeful hours of that night Marcia Fairfax wondered what would be her husband's attitude towards her in the future. She did not for one moment believe that their relations would be the same as they had been. She could not hold herself entirely blameless, even with her distorted ideas in the premises, and yet, it was just a trifle difficult for her to see her love affair with Saunders as anything more than an episode. True, they had expected to marry. Colonel Fairfax had not in the least overstated the matter of their manners with each other. Like many other very rigidly respectable folks Mrs. Fairfax never considered that anything between men and women was to be reckoned but actual marriage, either by law or nature. She drew the line at the ultimate. She but faintly understood the feeling that had prompted her husband to keep the finding of her photograph in secrecy and silence; to allow Prax to lay it away as a valued souvenir of honey-moon and battlefield. That he had kept no secrets from her concerning his first marriage, she was very sure, and she resented even the idea that he should ever have a thought of that lovely girl wife and her child.

Yet in selfish contradiction of her own requirements, she had never mentioned her engagement to Saunders, and now, in the darkness and stillness she pressed her burning cheeks into her pillow at the

thought of what he had known all these years, and of his reading of her love affair. She felt she would never be able to meet his eyes again in the uncompromising light of day. She found, however, that in this quarrel, as in all the years that she had lived as the wife of Jasper Fairfax, he was the urbane, gentle, lofty minded man. He had not invited the quarrel and he would not entertain it one moment longer than was necessary. He was the Jove of his house.

He let loose his thunderbolts and destroyed the noxious vapors. He swept away the ruins with a breath so that in peace and serenity he might rest with his family and friends.

She fell asleep when the morning sounds were wakening in tree and field. Some hours later, as in a dream she heard Zoe's voice on the stairs:

"Papa," she called, "Papa, are **you and** mama coming? breakfast's ready."

There was a quick, light step, and she saw her husband pass her door with uplifted finger.

"Softly, daughter," he said, "mama's sleeping. You know she was not well last night. I'm ready, I'll go down with you," and taking the child's face between his hands, he kissed her, once, twice, three times: "One for sick mama, one for myself, and one for little girl." Then the two went down the stairs stepping lightly, talking softly.

Later, when the husband and wife met, and always, there was kindness and protection in his every look and tone. He seemed to have forgotten the quarrel, but she knew he had not. She felt that the spring of this faultless behaviour was his sense of duty; that in his Herculean strength of character he was standing

between her and her own puerility. She was excused and tolerated. She was but a disappointing incident in his life. She knew that she would no longer dare to exercise her vigilance over his coming and going; that she could never again mask her jealousy as exacting love of his society, nor could there be any more playful allusions to straying fancy. She had closed this chapter of her life. Her childish tyranny, her unwomanly distrust, her inane unreason had conspired to pull down the fairest portion of her house about her head.

Through all the years since her marriage she had cultivated what is least lovely in a woman's character. She had done her work secretly and called it by a fair name, but, at last her web had been broken by her own hand. She might struggle in the tangled mesh of threads, she could never undo them. Forever they must remain a tangible, delicate, impassable barrier between herself and her husband.

The letter that she had used as an instrument to force this quarrel was left on the table where she had laid it, nor was it ever alluded to again between them; but when Mrs. Fairfax was alone with her brother she gave him both the letter and the story of the quarrel.

At once Westlake was full of advice and overflowing with what he termed logical conclusions. This visit to Washington was for some hidden purpose. They must double their vigilance, and,—but his sister cut him short:

“No George, I never can, I never dare mention the matter again. Look at that;” and she laid the soiled photograph on his knee.

"Well! What has that to do with it? *Meus Amo*. This looks as if it had been through the wars. Did the Colonel carry it? and has he sugared the bitter pill he means to give you some day through Adelaide's boy by a bit of sentimentality?"

"No. For once you are mistaken. Jasper is the Confederate soldier who sent Jack's things to his mother. He took this—from Jack, too,—but, kept it."

Mrs. Fairfax was staring straight into her brother's eyes, and her face was one red glow from the wavy crown of hair to the collar around her slender neck.

"That beats hell."

Westlake took up the card and studied the pretty, coquettish face, repeating the inscription.

"I say, Marcia, this was a pretty rough dose for the Colonel. You had never mentioned Jack to him?"

"No. How could I?"

"Well, sure enough? Jack Saunders was a good man, as men go, but he was not to be mentioned in the same day, in any sense, with the Colonel."

"That's just what I thought."

"And of course when you had the chance to marry Fairfax it's a good thing you didn't allow any sickly sentiment, any namby-pamby remembrance of plighted vows to interfere with your good fortune."

"I think, though I have many faults, my worst enemy never could accuse me of undue sentiment."

"Still, as matters have turned out, it would have been better if you had told the Colonel of Jack, as he told you of Adelaide. The cases are not quite parallel, but, his sense of honor, you know."

"Yes. I know all about his sense of honor. He

would have protected me, at any cost to himself, to whatever place I wanted to go. There would never have been one word more of marriage between us."

"Well it was the devil's own trap for him to find this photograph. Did you know of the inscription?"

"Yes; that is why, whenever I thought of it, I felt anxious to know what had become of it. But, if it had fallen into any other hands in the world it would have made no great difference to me."

"It's strange he never told you of it before, isn't it?"

"No, I think not; this is the first quarrel we ever had."

"Well, dear me, Marcia, I see no reason for taking the matter so seriously. No doubt the Colonel has had a dozen love affairs to your one. There was that—girl—Redfield's daughter whose ghost scares the darkies—"

"Yes, I know all about that. Jasper has often said that he has done many wild, inexcusable things;—all the things that young men do. He has never pretended to be a Sir Galahad; and how often have we both heard him declare that he wants no better proof of one's guilt than an everlasting harping on innocence of some particular sin. He condemns me by my watchfulness of him. He said the other evening that he quite understood how I came to know that the average man and woman are not to be trusted."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" roared Westlake. "I tell you sister he's a pretty sharp philosopher."

"Yes, so I find. If I could make any reasonable excuse I wouldn't go to Washington, nor allow him to."

"Oh but you must go. Of course you can't hang on to the Colonel all the time. You'll have to lengthen your tether, and not pull very hard on your end of it; but I'll look after him a little."

"You may be sure he if wants to see Adelaide and the boy,—think of her having the assurance to name him Jasper!"

"Yes, and that points to claiming a good big slice of Dad's wealth some day."

"Well you may be sure if he means to see them he'll tell you to go about your own business."

"Probably he will. Whether he tells me or not I think I know my business, and for the future a good part of it will be to look out for the interests of my niece. I'll try to see that her patrimony is not cut into halves for the benefit of her half-brother."

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a merry house-full that Mrs. Cogswell had gathered about her. All married people, excepting Westlake, young enough to enjoy being free for a while from home and business and professional cares, old enough to be safe from the glamour and falsity of fashionable society.

Mrs. Fairfax was considered the guest of honor, as she was not a born Kentuckian and she was jocularly made the recipient of the most lavish attention from her host. The continuous round of sight-seeing, parties, receptions and calls, effectually covered any estrangement that might, otherwise have been observed between her and her husband. In this circle, however, there must have been something unmistakable before any one of the women would have acknowledged a foible in Jasper Fairfax.

White-haired Mrs. Cogswell often declared that he would say as much with his eyes, a lift of his hand or an inclination of his head, as most men would take all day to speak, and make fools of themselves at last.

Sometimes he wondered how it would have been on this visit if he and Marcia had not quarrelled. Would she have insisted on keeping her hand on his arm from morning till night? and how would she have managed to do her usual sentry duty without making him as well as herself ridiculous in the eyes of their friends? It would have been difficult for him

to believe how seldom his wife dismissed from her mind, that other wife and her son.

In visiting the Governmental Departments where women were employed, she scanned every graceful figure, every handsome face. She knew that since the beginning of the war, ex-Senator Francis had been a comparatively poor man, and she thought it more than probable that Adelaide must be employed for the maintenance of the family. The fact that the boy was a Senate page bore out this surmise.

On the days when Mrs. Cogswell and her guests visited the two legislative houses, Mrs. Fairfax was much more interested in watching the boys who came and went, than she was in any of the proceedings of the law makers. The brisk, trim, boy figures drew her eyes even when her hostess pointed out men famous for wit, eloquence, or state-craft. She was so absorbed in this one idea, she felt that if she failed to see and recognize the boy who bore her husband's name, her visit would be a vexatious failure. Seeing him, she was sure she could guess whether or not he would fascinate his father in case they should meet. If she could see him privately she would not hesitate, —indeed she would even take some pains to question him. He could give no guess, neither could his mother, what friend of their better days was interested in them. Jasper said he had never seen the boy, nor had he met the mother since their separation; but, did he not contribute to their support?

The husband and wife were alone together but little. When this happened, however, Mrs. Fairfax was sure there was a hint of reserve in her husband's manner. She could not believe that their quarrel

and the cause of it, were not as constantly present in his mind as both were in her own. There was nothing she could complain of, no least chance for an allusion to the quarrel. To all appearances he never went anywhere alone. Young Dr. Dorne and Philip Jerome were jovial, pleasant men, and they, with Fairfax and Westlake were constantly going about together. Fairfax and Dorne were especially friends, as their school and college days were followed by a year of travel together, and all these years were cemented by companionship through the war from start to finish.

In truth Mrs. Fairfax was ready, at any cost to avoid further disagreement with her husband. Sometimes in reviewing the whole situation she wondered, pettishly, why it was that with all the unmistakable blessings of her lot there must always be something to make her unhappy. She was a long time in learning to accept her pot of odorous ointment and submit gracefully to the fact that an insect had been lured to its death therein.

In her girlhood she had had many admirers, but there was always something wanting. Jack Saunders was handsome, and possessed of that nameless fascination that drew a girl's heart to her eyes; but, he was poor, and had he lived through the war he would have remained poor to his last day. When he was ready to march away to tent, field and more than probable death, he had pleaded with Marcia to become his wife before they parted. This, her father would not consent to; and, it may be said that Marcia only referred the matter to him to shirk the disagreeable task of saying no to her lover. She had seen

numbers of girls bind themselves, 'till death us do part,' to boys in blue just before they marched away; but her blonde head held a cool, calculating brain. There was no place beneath her faultless coiffure for cheap sentiment, foolish romance. She fully agreed with her father. He had been a soldier in the Mexican war. Tent life was an old story to him and not a pleasant, not a heroic one. His counsel was:

"There is no romance in the actualities of war. There is no sentiment in any place where men are herded together free from the purifying restraints of family life. The barbarian soon crops out. The animal soon rises to the surface, the soul disappears. If a lawless action presents itself there is no thought of turning away. Instead, it is 'Ho for a good time! Tomorrow we may be dead!' Men in these situations are only held in check by fear of detection and punishment. Their morals are measured by the vigilance of superior officers. Superior officers have no standard of morals at all. Even in home life self denial is a rare trait in men. In camp life it is not at all. Now, my girl, let this soldier lover of yours wait until a year after he comes home from the war. Let him have time to become purified in a degree, physically, if not morally before you marry him."

To this advice Marcia Westlake listened attentively, followed obediently, until—But, then her father was dead; her brother not to be found either alive or dead. There was Colonel Fairfax. She had known him in society, had admired him as she might admire the—almost husband of another woman. He was a man of wealth and culture. He was far above her in the social scale. He offered her

marriage, at once, as protection. She would become, instead of an orphan, friendless, penniless, with a distant possibility of wedding a Union soldier as poor as herself, the wife of a Confederate officer of high grade in the army, and owning one of the finest estates in Kentucky. If he fell in battle, she, as his widow would be amply provided for. Then too, how gently lover-like he was! He approached her as if she was a queen. She thought that for once fate was kind, munificent. And yet, what could she say to Jack Saunders? If she could only be sure that he would never know what had become of her it would be a comfort. She did not wish his death, but it was the chance of war. When she heard the song with the refrain:

“And yet, and yet, we cannot forget
How many brave boys must fall;”

she always thought of Jack. If she had heard of his death she might have sighed; then remembered his worship of herself, and—smiled. She would have told herself, ‘all women who are not frights have such experiences.’

When, after several years of secret uneasiness she at last heard of his death, her momentary feeling of safety was cut short by the sowing of the seeds of distrust in regard to Adelaide and her son. How these seeds had grown and flourished she fully realized now that she had time to think, away from the constant society of her husband. What would the harvest be?

She recalled the feeling of rest and security

that came to her on her entrance into the Fairfax home. Whatever happened now, she had wealth and position. That her husband was in battle against the Government, that he was in position to have killed her father or brother, or to have been killed by them, troubled her not one whit. She made a lofty virtue of the necessity of her position. She said to her soul, 'my husband is an honorable man. His cause is my cause; his people are my people. I will live and die in his inherited home, and my ashes will mingle with the dead-and-dust generations of Fairfax. There will be no more worry and fret for the where-withal to supply the elegancies of life. No more beating about the frontiers of society. Old things have passed away, and the future dawns over the hills of Fairfax Farms through a golden haze.'

Remembering these thoughts and sensations, still she strained her eyes continually that she might, preadventure catch a glimpse of a fair woman she scornfully acknowledged as her rival, of a boy who looked like her husband and who bore his name.

Driving about the magnificent streets, in churches, theatres, at the receptions at the White House, always watchful, always thinking of this woman and her son. What might they not be doing? Where might she not see them?

But, the days went by, the weeks passed. She dared not inquire of Senator Cogswell if he had ever accepted the invitation of the boy and called upon his grandfather. Of this one thing that filled her thoughts she dared not speak one word. Long afterwards when this visit was casually mentioned by some one who had been with her or by others who

had known of it, it brought back to her a blurred, kaleidoscopic nightmare; a series of imaginary meetings with—*the other Mrs. Fairfax and her handsome son, Jasper.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Who is that big black fellow talking to Mrs. Cogswell?"

Fairfax asked this question of his host one evening during the visit in Washington. The parlors were full, but, "that big black fellow" was the most noticeable man in the company.

"Ha! Ha! Why, Colonel, one would think you were in one of the old-time markets, and speaking of a chattel."

"Upon my word he looks like one."

"Yes, and he has the manner too. Look at him. Every motion, every gesture is familiar to us who are accustomed to the race, and, more especially to the mixtures. I must introduce you to the Honorable John Burgoyne."

"Oh that's Burgoyne?"

"Yes, just home from Madrid."

"Do you suppose he ever knows what people say of his personnel?"

"Oh certainly. He professes to consider it a great joke."

"What account does he give of himself?"

"As far as I know he claims relationship with the Burgoynes of New Orleans; but, they supported the Confederacy, every mother's son of them. This fellow, at the close of the war was colonel of a colored regiment, and, in the round-up seven or eight years

ago, the president rewarded his bravery and loyalty with the consulship."

"If he's a Burgoyne it's a left-handed relationship now be sure of that. He has simply taken the name of the family he belonged to."

"Yes, I've no doubt of it, at all; but, we must not be too hard on him. He's looking about for a mild, healthful climate;—You see that pale, frail, washed-out blonde woman there in the corner?"

"Yes, his wife I reckon?"

"Yes. She's a Northern woman. Her residence abroad has not agreed with her, and—"

"I should think a residence with that big brute anywhere would disagree with her."

"Oh tut, tut, Jasper," and Cogswell laughed silently, "don't talk that way. Colonel Burgoyne has half the women in Washington at his feet; and, there! see that? There's your own fair true love bowing to him and going away on his arm."

"Oh I suppose he's a man that the average woman would admire and be drawn to, simply through his excess of animal magnetism."

"Well, as I was saying, he's talked to me quite—confidingly about finding a home. He must have a climate that is mild the year round. Mrs. Burgoyne and my wife are friends, and wife always finishes her talks about them by saying 'I'm very sorry for poor Mrs. Burgoyne,' though why she's sorry, she never explains. So it has come to be arranged, that at the close of the session, when I'm at home to chaperone the Honorable John, he's going to visit Bellaire with his wife, and, if they can suit themselves they will buy a home."

"Well, of course if he has money, it will be a good thing for the town, but, by the Lord I shall despise to hob-nob with him specially."

"Now see there! What a difference in tastes!" as Mrs. Fairfax came into view on the arm of Burgoyne, he all flattering attention, she all smiles and vivacity.

Fairfax laughed. "Marcia's very polite.

Then Mrs. Fairfax was seen to present her brother to Burgoyne, and the two men were together for some time.

Next morning at breakfast, not one of the guests who had attended Mrs. Cogswell's "At Home" was more talked of than Colonel Burgoyne. The women declared him strikingly handsome, gallant, knightly, in short, manly perfection. The men, while admitting that his appearance would win for him a second glance in a crowd, that his manner was suavity itself, yet knew him to be superficial in education, unprincipled in business, insincere in friendship.

When the discussion had about worn itself out, the host, from his end of the table said quietly: "Here's Fairfax, still as a mouse; but he said to me last night that he was sure the Honorable John's a nigger."

Then it was "Oh Colonel!" and "Oh Fairfax!" and "Oh Jasper!" from all sides of the table.

Fairfax laughed and sipped his coffee. When the tumult had subsided he said: "I think I know the marks and the Honorable John has them all."

"I tell you," said Westlake, "I find it a most considerate proceeding, when hearing an extravagant, statement, to make liberal allowance for the speaker's ruling passion."

"But that isn't allowed in law cases," from Mrs. Jerome.

"No, the law leaves no margin for idiosyncracies. It is the iron bedstead that lops off a head that is too long and stretches a figure that is too short. Probably some of you know that brother Fairfax has a mania for discovering the black drop."

"And brother Westlake has a pet word. If he finds a man knows what he's talking about, he calls it mania. He uses this word as doctors do malaria. Whatever they don't recognize they call by this long suffering name."

"Take care, take care, old man," from Dr. Dorne. "You don't want to smoothe your best friend the wrong way."

"Oh I know how to smoothe you Henry, and we've known each other too long to skip the truth when we come to it."

"That's right Colonel," from Mrs. Dorne. "I think next to housekeeping, medicine is the most inexact science in the world."

The conversation drifted away to old time practices in medicine, and Doctor Dorne told of some old medical books he had picked up in Europe as curiosities. Mrs. Cogswell regaled her guests with reminiscences of housekeeping when she was young, and told stories she had had from her mother and her grandmother.

The house-full of Kentuckians, upon each social occasion, witnessed a repetition of a part of that evening's experience. Colonel Burgoyne was the most popular man in society. Wherever there were the fairest, sprightliest, most faultlessly gowned

women; where ever smiles were gayest, eyes brightest, badinage most sparkling there in the midst was the ex-consul. It may be said too that wherever men stood aloof with smiles on their lips that came dangerously near being sneers, wherever there were covert whispers and significant broken sentences; then in that vicinity might be seen the towering figure, the dark, sensual face of John Burgoyne.

"I suppose, after a few years," Fairfax said to Cogswell on an occasion of this kind, "we'll not only tolerate such men as Burgoyne, but the tar black, as well."

"Oh no; oh no. The black race will never gain more than it has now. In fact I think prejudice in the north will grow instead of disappearing. The blacks will die out in time. The death rate in the south is much greater now than it was a few years ago. The blacks know nothing of the actualities of life. They are free and they are voters, but they know as little how to use these rights as a three-years child. They're going to have a rough time of it. I'm afraid that by the end of the years required for their evolution from serfdom to intelligent, thrifty, self-respecting freedom there will be but few left to tell the story of the war in their behalf."

"But, the political wire-pullers are not going to wait for the slow sure process of evolution. There are votes to be bought now, cheap, by the million. No matter what we know the blacks to be, they are now a potent factor in our scheme of government."

"Yes, that's true. We of the South must stand by each other. We must insist, that, while as forgiven rebels we are taken back into the fold of the Union,

we will tolerate nothing but a white government. It'll be hard lines for the nigger who aspires to office in the South."

"Look at Burgoyne. He seems to find his lines in pleasant places."

"Ah but he poses as a white man; as a loyal, persecuted Union Southerner."

"Even if his pretentions were true, his inferiority as a man cannot be denied. It is the party that claims the darkey voter that also claims him; and see to what a height he has climbed."

"He didn't climb, he was boosted. It was one of the chances of war. I am older than you. I've noticed that war and high water floats many odious things to the surface. Many things ride on the top-most wave that should be buried out of sight to rot."

"I've wondered much what foreigners think of us, when such a man as Burgoyne represents us at their ceremonious Courts."

"You've been across a year or two, how did it seem then?"

"We had better representatives when I was over; fine, scholarly men,—men that any nation might be proud of."

"Yes, of course. Well, as I said before, the war played queer antics. Wars always do. They're like cyclones. They whirl everything in their track into chaos. You know a strong wind will take a half rotten log of wood, or the carcass of a dead dog much higher than it will a marble or bronze statue. Frequently the most worthless men and things are lodged by wars and cyclones in the highest places."

CHAPTER XIX.

Of all the new-comers to Bellaire since the close of the war, no family received a warmer welcome than did the Burgoynes. A fine, old but impoverished place was purchased, and put in repair. It lay on the opposite side of the town from Fairfax Farms.

Colonel Burgoyne was welcome because he had a family about him. He added to the social life of the place. He was welcome because he had a long, full purse and he used money lavishly. He employed many servants and paid them well. All provision dealers were glad to receive orders signed John Burgoyne.

Mrs. Burgoyne was sweet, gentle, womanly; of the clinging vine type. She seemed to be always appealing to some one for help. If she talked to a woman friend she clasped her hand and hung upon it. If she stood by her husband she leaned against him, or folded her long, characterless hands about his arm. If one of her black-eyed, curly-haired, yellow-skinned children happened to be near, its shoulders were rests for her hands. She wavered when she walked alone, and one never could tell to what point she was going. She never deliberately seated herself, nor seemed to have any purpose in rising. She wilted into a chair and swayed like wind-blown smoke in leaving it.

From the first, she and Mrs. Fairfax were the warmest of friends. Westlake and Burgoyne fraternized in the happiest fashion, and there was much

business going on between them. The swarthy ex-consul had the most implicit confidence in the ability of the tall, pink-and-white lawyer. Burgoyne affected the manners of the European aristocrat. He toiled not on his farm neither did he have a business nor a profession; yet, there was no shade of snobbishness, no offensive imitation of the high-class patron in his intercourse with professional and business men. His manners were conciliatory. He seemed anxious only to please. He never provoked discussion, touched all subjects lightly, and watched the face of his listener while he was speaking.

Colonel Fairfax met his advances, in Washington, and later in Bellaire, politely. He was not even chilly as he could be at times, but he was not cordial. He gave no cause for complaint, but he gave nothing else. When the Herculean ex-colonel of a colored regiment in the Federal army effusively offered his hand, the ex-colonel who had battled and still sighed for the Lost Cause imitated the action: He gave his hand, but, nothing more.

When Mrs. Fairfax or her brother would say, "Jasper," or "Colonel," you don't like Colonel Burgoyne; I think it very strange;" the answer was, "Some men there are, love not a gaping pig. I have no special dislike of pigs, but, I confess there is something extremely repulsive to me in this John Burgoyne."

To Mrs. Burgoyne he was all gentle deference. One day after handing her to her carriage at his own door, and she had driven away, he said to his wife and to Westlake: "I wonder if that baa-lamb of a woman knows the origin of John Burgoyne."

Mrs. Fairfax answered, "Why Jasper, she loves him devotedly. If she knows, or if she doesn't it makes no difference."

Westlake laughed, declaring, "Colonel you're clean daft! I don't believe Burgoyne has any more Negro blood than I have. He's probably a mixture of Spanish and French Creole. In the gulf states there are very few fair complexions."

"It's not alone his inky complexion. I've known many undeniably white people with as dark skin as his, but there's that peculiar tinge, both in his skin and in the white of his eyes, as well as the unmistakable kink in his hair. Look at the children too, in spite of their fair mother;—veritable pickaninnies. Why, I've seen Mrs. Burgoyne look at them as if she couldn't understand why they should call her mother. She looks," and Fairfax laughed, "as I fancy a ring-dove might at a nest full of young cowbirds that she had unwittingly hatched while her own eggs have been tumbled out and worms have eaten them."

There was much going back and forth between the Fairfax and Burgoyne families. Zoe found the brood of children with their foreign manners and their chattering of Spanish, then breaking into English, or making a queer mixture of the two languages, most interesting. The oldest of the five, Sally, was a year or more younger than Zoe but looked older. The two little girls grew to be inseparable. A very pretty picture they made. Zoe, the fairest of blondes, with pale golden hair, and Sally with her olive skin, heavy dark hair, and flashing black eyes.

One day, just as her father and uncle came home

from business, Zoe came up the drive on her pony. She had had, as she expressed it, "A most beautiful gallop with Sally." The little maid's cheeks were pink, her eyes like turquoise. The "beautiful gallop" had blown her hair into a shimmering cloud about her shoulders. Her father watched her admiringly as she gave a full account of the afternoon. When she had finished that, and her praises of Sally, he said:

"Dear me Zoe, I'm glad Sally isn't a boy. If she was, I'm afraid, within a year or two you'd want to marry and leave mama and me, entirely."

"Oh, Sally and I don't want to marry;—not now, anyway. We don't know who she'll marry, but I'm going to marry her cousin Guido Castlemere."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Westlake. "Oh Colonel! hear the pretty little rebel against paternal ideas! She isn't afraid of a drop more or less of inky blood."

Mrs. Fairfax laughed too, but she said: "Oh hush George, it might be repeated."

Fairfax smiled indulgently, and, drawing Zoe to a seat on the broad arm of his chair, said: "Well my lady-bird, who is Cousin Guido Castlemere? and where does he live?"

"Why he's Sally's cousin, and he lives in Madrid. His mother is Sally's aunt, and Sally is named for her, and her name isn't Sally at all, but Salome."

"Ah indeed!" and at this name on the lips of his daughter he slightly relaxed his hold of her. It was only for an instant. Then, "And what else about Cousin Guido? If you are going to marry him I want to know a great deal about him."

"Well, Sally has ever so many pictures of him and,

papa, he's beautiful!" with a quick clasping of her slim little hands.

Westlake laughed continuously and immoderately. Mrs. Fairfax only smiled and said: "The idea of those children having such thoughts!"

"Oh," her brother answered, "look at the little tots who can barely walk, playing with their dolls and being mamas and housekeepers. It's only womanly instinct. Zoe and Sally are all right."

"And how old is Guido?" Fairfax was heard to ask.

"He was thirteen in August. He sent Sally a beautiful long letter telling her all about his birthday party. The letter was written in Spanish, and Sally told me what it meant. Sally says may be her aunt and cousin will come and visit them next year."

"Do you think you and Guido will marry then?" Fairfax asked with great seriousness.

"Oh no! I don't expect to marry till I'm old enough to wear long dresses. I want a white silk wedding gown with a long, *long* train. Did you have that kind, mama?"

"Oh my child! I was in great trouble when I was married. I gave very little thought to my gown."

"Your mama married a soldier with an arm shot half off. She had to think of caring for him and getting him home instead of white silk dresses with trains;" said Fairfax.

"That must have been very dreadful," Zoe said thoughtfully.

"Now Zoe, dear," from her mother, "go and let Polly make you ready for dinner. The bell will ring in a very few minutes. Papa and Uncle must go too."

As Zoe disappeared her father said, "I wonder who this Guido and his mother can be. Has Mrs. Burgoyne ever mentioned them?"

"Never. I suppose they must be Mr. Burgoyne's relations. Probably his sister went over with them and married there."

"Not if this boy is thirteen years old."

"That's true. Colonel Burgoyne went out to Madrid in the first months of Grant's first term;—I wonder if he really resigned because of Mrs. Burgoyne's health."

"Oh I guess so," Westlake yawned.

"And this boy," Mrs. Fairfax continued must have been born about the beginning of the war. I'll ask Mrs. Burgoyne about him."

"You want to know something of your future son-in-law?" Westlake asked.

"Oh such nonsense! I am very fond of Mrs. Burgoyne and naturally I feel interested in her relations."

After this there were many other things reported of Guido and his mother. Sally had frequent letters from him, and bye and bye, there were messages from the boy in Madrid to his cousin's friend in Bellaire; and Zoe was impelled to take up the study of Spanish that she might read for herself these messages.

It came to pass on one of the many afternoons that Mrs. Fairfax and Zoe were visiting the Burgoynes that Zoe brought a large photograph of a beautiful, dark-eyed boy for her mother to look at, saying,

"This is Guido, mama."

"As Mrs. Fairfax held and admired the picture, she asked her hostess:

"Is he your nephew?"

"No, he's the son of Mr. Burgoyne's cousin. So you see the children are not much relation after all. Cousin Salome is a lovely woman. She's been a widow for several years. I think Count Castlemere died when Guido was about two years old. He has no recollection of his father."

"So there's a title?"

"Yes, and a large estate. Salome is well provided for. There's no need of a second marriage for her."

"Is she American born?"

"Oh yes. She's a native of New Orleans. She went to Europe a year or two before the war, and has never been home since. She says she's grown so thoroughly Europeanized she has ceased to care to come; but we hope to persuade her to make us a visit bye and bye. The children are so fond of Guido."

"So many Americans go to Europe with no intention of staying, and yet remain there for years. I wonder what the charm is?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell. I was homesick all the time I was there. The climate was so trying. With Salome it's different. In temperament she's very much like Mr. Burgoyne. -She finds Madrid delightful. But, she likes Rome too, and Florence and delights in Paris. I used to tell her that she's so handsome, and so much admired it doesn't make any difference where she lives; she always has a crowd of worshippers. She had just lost her father before she left America;—her mother she doesn't remember, and the breaking out of the war made her stay almost compulsory, as all her relations were in the army, and her father's home broken up."

CHAPTER XX.

Time passed, the busy, happy days flew over the heads of the children giving them new graces. Silver threads began to show in the heavy brown hair of Colonel Fairfax, and his wife, whose blonde tresses seemed to have made a truce with time, admired him more than ever before. For him awaited a magnificent elderly manhood. Often as Mrs. Fairfax silently watched him and thought over the chance that had brought them together, she called herself a fortunate woman. Her uneasiness in regard to the past grew into a shadow of itself, and her husband's scathing rebuke of her jealousy had been like an extinguisher turned over a smouldering fire. It was her constant care to hide, not only the least showing of jealousy, but to eradicate it even from her thoughts. The more she grew to trust her husband the more worthy she felt herself to be of her station. If it had not been for the constant companionship of her brother, she might have grown to remember her fear of rivalry as an evil dream. Westlake found many occasions to make allusions to the first marriage of his brother-in-law. He frequently pictured what might happen if the unacknowledged son should see fit to claim a share of his father's estate upon coming of age, or upon the death of the father.

Sometimes Mrs. Fairfax would answer: "Probably it would only be right for Jasper to divide with the boy. Both he and Zoe would be rich, even then."

"No I don't think it would be right. Adelaide should have been true to her home and her husband. See what you did!"

"Yes, I know," Mrs. Fairfax would answer absently, and, after being told this countless times through a dozen years and more she grew to believe that she had paid a very fair price for her husband and all that came with him. Really, she had sacrificed nothing, gained everything. The questions that were decided by the war had never meant anything to her. She believed in her father's political opinions without knowing what they were. When he was gone and she was married to Jasper Fairfax she found it easy to adapt herself to the situation.

One thing troubled her, though she never spoke of it, scarcely acknowledged it to her own heart. She felt that her husband with his inborn ideas of caste must feel himself superior to her and her brother; and yet, being her husband, his high breeding would prevent him ever showing her that her surmise was correct. When she had thought thus far, and remembered her husband's way of judging, she acknowledged with crimson face that her suspicions were the native growth of her own dwarfish soul. She knew what a stupendous satisfaction it would be to her to be able to trace her ancestry through a score of generations to a noble, or at least a worthy source. How much arrogance would not such an ancestry excuse! And yet, where was there a man of simpler manners than Jasper? How cordial was he amongst friends! how kindly considerate of his inferiors. No man was ever so ready to acknowledge merit, none more willing to excuse mediocrity. His servants

never heard a harsh word from him, neither did they ever fail in deference. She recalled her reproof of him in the first weeks of their marriage when she thought it an undignified, an unbecoming thing that he should go to black Mammy's room and be comfortable in her chair. Now, after all these years together, Mammy suffering with the infirmities of age would have passed many a lonely hour, had it not been for this kindly custom of 'Mas' Jaspas' and, by his example transmitted to wife and daughter.

Mrs. Fairfax knew that it was this quality of kindness in her husband's nature that had made him fairly worshiped by the men he had led on many hard fought battle fields. To them he had not been the man of culture, wealth and station. He was their kindly commander, their comrade. He had never shown that overbearing arrogance that provokes an inferior to say: "I'm as good as you are." His loftiness of character sunk all question of difference of worldly estate. His soul recognized its kindred and rejoiced, no matter where met, and though, perforce he entertained strangers and aliens within his gates.

With the children that Zoe drew to the house he was always upon the happiest terms. He was friend, protector, adviser, comrade. If there was a May-Day or mid-summer dance on the lawn each little girl must have one number on her tablet filled with the Colonel's name. When Zoe learned several Spanish dances of the little Burgoynes she could not be satisfied until papa had learned them; "For," she explained, "all the girls are going to learn them, and then what will you do when I have my parties, and you don't know the dances,"

"Sure enough!" was his serious exclamation, and forthwith he obediently took his training, up and down the parlor, or probably the veranda to Sally's music on the piano, guitar or mandolin, while little Jack Burgoyne clicked the castanets.

Mrs. Fairfax and her brother looked on and laughed at Zoe's management of her father. That they too might learn the dances was not denied; but, they were not necessary. Zoe suggested that her mother might learn the music, and Uncle Westlake might be useful if he would handle the castanets.

While the children sang and danced the time away, while the parents lived their lives over again and grew youthful in the care-free society, while many of the blacks wandered away from their birth-place, finding homes in north, east, west or further south, while the old beeches that made the shady lane to the ruin grew broader, their long, graceful branches making a wider sweep, throwing a denser shade, while the ruin itself, with its ivies and other creeping vines grew into a net-work of twilight passages where the ghosts were said to walk by day as well as by night, while the messages still came from over the sea, and the blonde child grew to be a tall slim maiden and answered her unknown correspondent in Spanish as pure as his own, still Cousin Guido Castlemere and his mother did not come.

There were so many things to be done. The boy's education must be considered before anything else. His letters to Sally and Zoe were full of all that he was doing. He was never idle. Even his vacations were filled. These times he spent in travel, with a teacher and his mother. He studied languages,

governments and people in their own homes. He said that as America was so far away, and so large, he must leave it till he could give it several years. As his mother's country, too, it deserved more of his time than any other.

Within a few months Zoe would be nineteen. Her birthdays were always celebrated; they were always a time for reminiscences. She had come in the dark days of battle and murder. Her first cry had mingled with the thunders of artillery, the clashing of sabres, the groans of the dying, the wailing of widows and orphans. It had broken upon the silent, tearless agony of mothers of dead soldiers. Over her tiny white head had been said: "Oh be glad you have a daughter! She can never be a soldier!"

Time the great healer had spread a living green covering over fields that had been drenched with blood. New branches had grown on trees whose foliage had been scorched away by shot and shell. In the hearts of men, the bitterness was dying out.

In the beautiful Autumn, Mrs. Fairfax planned to give as fine a party as Bellaire had ever witnessed, to celebrate her daughter's birthday anniversary, and her emancipation from little-girl-dom.

Sally Burgoyne, too, was to come out of the chrysalis state. After much conferring, much deep thought as to the proper management of the difficult problem, that of allowing one to attend the coming-out party of the other, while that one was not yet in society, it was decided that the party should be a dual affair. It must be on Zoe's birthday, so, at Zoe's house; but, the girls would be introduced and receive

the congratulations of their friends, together, with their mothers.

There was much planning, many consultations, but it came to pass that every least particular of the party was arranged a full month ahead of time. Never was anything in the wide world so important. The two debutantes talked of nothing else, and all their friends were glad in their gladness. Their dresses, of course would be simple, but elegant, perfect. Then, when all had been arranged, when the dance programme had been revised and re-revised until it was satisfactory, then, what should happen to create in advance the most inexpressible raptures, the most joyful astonishment!

It was Sally who brought the news. Her father had carried home a letter for her, late in the afternoon and had thrown it, with other mail on a table in the hall. There, more than an hour afterwards, she had found it.

What matter if it was late? Was she to wait all that night, and into the next day to tell Zoe the good news? Not while she had her safe, fleet saddle horse and her faithful groom, Julius Cesar.

The Fairfax family were enjoying the short half-hour before dinner. They were in the wide hall, a blazing log was in the big fire-place, but doors and windows stood open. Mrs. Fairfax sat in the corner close by the jamb, a light shawl over her shoulders. It was a habit she had taken up lately. When her brother said, "Are you cold Marcia?" she answered, "No, I'm getting old;" and smiled an answer to her husband's anxious look. Zoe said;

"It's a pretty shawl, mama, and you look pretty in it."

Her father said: "Mama ought to be putting on more flesh. I think after this party's over, we'll go south somewhere for the winter."

Then was heard the clatter of hoofs, and out by the steps, were seen Sally Burgoyne and her groom. Before the black boy could dismount and offer his back for a stepping block, Colonel Fairfax had run down the steps and lifted the girl from the saddle.

"Why, what in the world is the matter?" he asked as he saw how excited she was. Her cheeks were like pomegranite blossoms, her eyes seemed to emit sparks of brightness.

Zoe was at her side. As soon as she could speak, and while she was embracing her friend in her own whirlwind fashion, Sally exclaimed:

"Oh Zoe! darling! the best news! Here's the letter, but, don't bother to read it—Guido's coming!"

It was too much for words. After all these years of anticipating, of castle-building; after so many postponements, now, to come as the crown of the great event! The girls subsided, upon a settee still clasped in each other's arms. Westlake laughed silently, and looked from the girls, such a vivid picture as they made, to his sister and her husband.

Fairfax had placed a chair in front of the fire, and sat upon it very straight, and looked very much interested. When he had a chance to speak, he said:

"Now what will happen next for you two fortunates! Is Guido's mother coming?"

"Oh yes!" Sally answered, and she took the letter from the envelope. They are always together, and

here is something for you, Zoe, listen: "Tell Miss Fairfax that I shall expect my formal invitation to her part of the debut party to be waiting for me. As she is your senior by a trifle I shall claim the honor of dancing the second number on the program with her. It's likely she will give the first to some member of her family. Third number, I hope to dance with my sweet cousin Sally."

"Isn't it too delightful! A real Count at my first real party! Oh me!" and Zoe clasped her hands in ecstasy.

"Zoe, suppose he doesn't dance well?" said Westlake.

"Oh but he does, doesn't he Sally?"

"Oh surely! He's always danced. He danced beautifully when we were in Madrid"

Mrs. Fairfax felt that this would be a great social triumph. However radicals like her husband might look askance at John Burgoyne, this young relation of his was a gentleman beyond question. He and his mother would arrive a few days before the party. There would be ample time for exchange of civilities and, next after the debutantes, the Countess Castlemere should be the guest of honor.

CHAPTER XXI.

The passengers and crew aboard *La Paris* when that stout steamer was battling with unprecedented storms on her way from Havre to New York had many anxious hours; but, doubtless in their trouble they would have smiled could they have known clairvoyantly or otherwise, the anxiety of two far inland American girls, concerning the steamer for the sake of one handsome young man amongst them.

Sally and Zoe imagined the big steamer out on the waves with only Guido. He was alone on the wide decks. He lounged or read, or made music in the elegant saloon, he sat at all the tables; he slept in all the state rooms. There was a multitude of him. Each one of the many pictures he had sent had materialized. He was several beautiful little boys. He was a student in cap and gown. He was a graceful polo-player. He was captain of a reckless football team. He was the champion skater amongst the dikes and ditches of Holland. He was Don Fernando in an amateur theatrical company.

Great was the trouble caused by the delayed steamer. Every morning, Sally and Zoe met at Westlake's office to get the earliest glimpse of his day old New York paper. How dreadful were those headlines: "No news of *La Paris*: Two days over due." Then three days, four days, five and six. The girls thought seriously of deferring the party. How could they be glad and gay, not knowing what had hap-

pened, not knowing at what moment the most shocking news might come? On the seventh day, oh rapture! They needed not to wait for the clumsy printing presses, the creeping trains. Colonel Burgoyne had a telegram from Guido. The vessel was in, crippled, and with captain, crew and passengers sadly worn. The telegram was sent before all the landing formalities had been complied with. Very soon, the travellers would start on their long railway journey.

No more news until the morning of the day before the party. Then only a few words from a breakfast station. If nothing happened the foreigners would arrive late that day.

They made quite a company as they stepped upon the platform of the Bellaire station where Colonel Burgoyne and Sally met them. There was the Countess, a tall large woman with dark eyes and snow-white hair. Count Guido, his man, his mother's maid, and an elderly man, tall, broad, dark of face and gray of hair. This last seemed to have all the care of the whole party. He carried the baggage checks, gave all orders, and he alone of the three servants spoke to Burgoyne. It was noticed by the usual crowd of loungers about a railway station that this elderly servant not only spoke to the ex-consul, but that they shook hands most cordially. This, however, passed as nothing save evidence of long servitude and appreciation of it by a relation of the Countess.

In the rebound of spirits Sally and Zoe were more joyous than before. Surely now kindly fate would

let nothing happen to cheat them out of the glory of a perfect evening.

Nothing happened that cast more than a flitting shade over their bright faces. Countess Castlemere did not feel equal to meeting strangers after her wearisome journey. She remained at home to rest, so said the Burgoyne party when they presented themselves without her.

But the young Count, Guido! Zoe in her shining white silk, her fair hair coiled high on her head, and ornamented with a half blown rose as crimson as her lips, lifted her eyes as Colonel Burgoyne said:

“Cousin Guido let me introduce you to the fairest of all American girls.”

She met the expectant, inquiring gaze of a pair of luminous dark eyes below a broad smoothe forehead, that was shaded with curling hair, black at first glance, but taking on a glint of bronze in a strong light. The dark face was smoothe and boyish and beautiful. There was a smiling alertness in look and manner as if he were continually anticipating something new and delightful. He was tall, slight, and graceful in every movement. His manner towards herself was something new, even to Zoe. He was so gentle, so deferential, so quick to discover her thoughts.

They had their first dance together, a plain quadrille, and when it was over, he said as he led her to a seat by her mother, “Ah, that was lovely! but, we must have a waltz.” Bye and bye they had it, the graceful, swaying, Spanish waltz with guitar and castanets added to the music, and the heavier instruments hushed, Zoe had inly determined as

soon as she heard that Guido was coming, to have this dance with him. As she swung round and round amongst the others, she wondered how she ever could have supposed she had danced before. This new friend, this long heard-of cousin of Sally's was the very spirit of music and motion. His firm slender hands scarcely touched her, and yet, guided by them she seemed to fairly float on the waves of the music.

Mrs. Fairfax, watching them, approached her husband: "How beautiful Zoe is to-night."

"Yes," he answered and sighed.

"And the young Count;-isn't he very handsome?"

"Yes," he answered again absently. After a pause, "He resembles Burgoyne in a measure, but there's something else about him that is familiar but I can't make it out."

"Oh he's a much finer type of man than Colonel Burgoyne. I hope Zoe's fancy will not out-run his own," and Mrs. Fairfax forced a little interrogative laugh while she watched her husband's face.

"I hope so too," he answered as if he was thinking of something else. "I believe it's Hawthorne's Donatella he recalls."

"What an idea!—But, we can see his ears, they're human. I'm sorry his mother couldn't come."

"It's more graceful for her not to be here until after calls are exchanged."

Sally Burgoyne divided the honors equally with Zoe. Never had she appeared so fairly scintillant in her dark beauty. When she and Guido were partners in a quadrille she whispered a word to the leader of the musicians and the stately measure changed to a

mad gallop. She improvised steps, whirls, balances, chasees, all with a pressure of her finger, a glance of her eye, and never once confused or interrupted the other dancers. She and Guido made an elaborate embroidery on the plain figures of the dance. They were the sparkle of champagne on the decorous glass of sherry.

"My dear," Burgoyne said to his wife who sat in a group of which Fairfax was one, "Look at those two spirits of mischief. Now will you and Cousin Sally have your trouble all over again. Colonel," turning to Fairfax, "that pair of youngsters, a few years ago were the worst boy and girl in Madrid."

"But, dear, they were not bad, they were only full of spirit, as they are now," said Mrs. Burgoyne.

"I'm sure," Fairfax remarked smiling "that if their sins are always as graceful as they are to-night they may be easily pardoned."

"Certainly, certainly," Burgoyne answered. "What most astonishes me is their perfect understanding of each other. It takes but the crook of a finger, the lift of an eye-lash, and, away they go."

"How well they mark the time and yet put in all those extras, and fill the requirements of the formal figure," said Mrs. Jerome.

Fairfax listened and answered while his thoughts were away in the past when other companies danced the hours away in these same rooms. Some of the old-time dancers were here, looking on at their daughters, as he looked on at his. It seemed such a short time since he, a child, had danced with other children and looked over his shoulder, or his little partner's head, at his lovely, girlish mother. Then

she was gone, and for a long time, most of the dances were in the other house. As this thought crossed his mind, Castlemere passed with Fanny Jerome on his arm. What a good dancer, what a free hearted, rollicking comrade the girl's mother was in the old days! What a warm, true womanly friend she was still! In the old days the charm of the time was—but why think of her?

The night was warm and full of the spicy odors of Autumn. The doors and the long windows all stood open. Many of the dancers were on the verandas, still keeping time to waltz, polka or schottische. Others of the company walked up and down, resting, they said. The full moon made the ample veranda, draped here and there with vines, still in their summer green, an ideal surrounding for the scene of gaiety within. Many of the chairs, settees and hammocks were occupied. Pairs in the shadier spots meant "the old story" rehearsed once more to the sounds of music, dancing feet and all the jollity of youth.

It was on the veranda that looked down the avenue of beeches that Sally Burgoyne stood with her cousin surrounded by a half dozen others. Colonel Fairfax was not far away. He and Dr., Dorne, the only one now, were walking about and recalling old times, which, judging by tones and frequent laughter must have been pleasant.

Suddenly, from the direction of the ruin, a shriek rang out on the night. It was long and loud, and repeated over and over. Everybody heard it, even the dancers inside, above the sound of the music, a

full silver band, playing a quick step schottische arranged from the air of "Way down South in Dixie."

All was noisy confusion, or pale-lipped silence. The music stopped, and players, dancers, chaperones, servants, all crowded the veranda. To the hurried questions and breathless exclamations, Fairfax answered. "It's nothing but a frightened darkey;—it can be nothing else." He reminded his neighbors of the foolish notions of the blacks in regard to the ruin. In the midst of his laughing assurances, all heard some one running rapidly, gasping and groaning. Evidently a man, large and clumsy, was coming up the beech avenue. Fairfax descended the steps and stood on the walk in the full moonlight. Directly the runner was in view, hatless, coatless, mouth open, eyes rolling.

"Why, Tim, Tim, so it's you? What can be the matter? What's happened?"

"Oh Mas' Jaspa! Oh good Lawd! Oh de ghoses! Oh Lawd!" and the negro dropped on the walk at his master's feet.

"There Tim, wait for your breath; you left it with the ghosts," and Fairfax laughed with his guests who had joined him on the walk. A bevy of girls came tripping down the steps, but their host playfully "shoo-ed" them back reminding them of their slippers and the heavy dew that lay on the walk. He with a number of the men stood by Tim and bantered him with many derisive ha-has, about the ghosts that had given him chase. As soon as Tim had recovered his breath he rose from the ground, and most solemnly insisted that he had not only seen the ghosts, but he had heard them.

"But," said Doctor Dorne, "you know Tim that ghosts are quiet folk. We always say 'as still as a spook.'"

"Dat's all right, doctah, but I done hear dat ghos' laff an' laff. I seed de two of em in de grave ya'd."

"For heaven's sake Tim!" from Westlake, "what were you doing in the grave yard?"

"Well Mistah Westlake, da's on'y one right time fo' to cotch a rabbit ef so yo' wants de right kine o'luck. I done promise myse'f I'd git Missy Zoe a rabbit's foot, an' dis berry night was de time. See dat big roun' moon?"

Amidst the chorus of laughter, Fairfax exclaimed: "Sure enough! Tim, it's an outrage of the ghosts to interfere with you on such an undertaking! And you didn't get the rabbit?"

"No sah. Hit's dah in de trap all fas' enough, but dem two ghoses des come traspesin long wha we done bury Victo' an' Miss Salome, an' dey stop an' look at de head stones, an' dey des stan' an' laff an' laff lak dey done gone crazy."

Said Phil Jerome, "Perhaps the ghosts were looking for a rabbit too."

"Oh Lawd, Mistah Jerome I dun-now w'at dey look fo'. I des run an' run an' dem ghoses cla' guv me de hoo-doo. When I was fo' sho runin' towa'ds home hyah I fotch up way todeh side de grave ya'd, an' dah was dem ghoses, too. Den I tinks I make a shoot fo' Miss Agnes' house, an' fo' Gaud, dah was dem ghoses. An' one ghose hed a long vail on huh haid, an' I seed huh settin on dat big stun at lays in de flo' by de fi' place, an' she sot dah lookin at de hole in de back wall lak she's wa'min' he se'f,

an' de man ghose he stan back lil ways, an' dey wasn't laffin. Dey was lookin mighty solemn. An' den de man ghose he say, 'Come way—dah's dat nigga gen.' An' de woman ghose say, an' she look at me wid big eyes lak fi; 'Dat's Tim.' Den I des yell an' run, an' hyah I is."

Gradually, as Tim told his story a group of scared blacks gathered on the lawn. This was the greatest fright any of them had ever experienced. Of all the rabbits caught in the Fairfax burying ground and slaughtered for the sake of the talismanic foot, not one of the rabbit hunters had ever had an adventure like this. True, each and every one had seen a ghost; but heretofore, all ghosts had been flitting shadows. They had been shy, keeping themselves in the denser shade of tree, monument, or church. These two hilarious disembodiments, while evidently not courting the presence of Tim, were certainly careless of it in a measure.

Fairfax told Tim to go to the housekeeper and get a glass of something to quiet his nerves, and when he was gone, the excitement of the fright seemed to the guests only a romantic diversion, and Zoe was congratulated. No other girl in all the county could have such a picturesque adjunct to her birthday dance.

Castlemere declared that it was the most truly delightful ghost story he had ever heard in any land concerning any ruin. He must certainly see the place.

In the quarters there was much shaking of gray heads. This appearance of Salome's ghost on this night, boded no good to the young daughter of the

house. Why should the ghost laugh? Was it because of the folly of her survivors in burying her poor charred bones? There her ashes mingled with the earth while her restless spirit wandered to and fro, and came to sit and muse in the desolate house on the cruelty that had sent her hurrying out of life in her youth and glorious beauty.

While the blacks had always fully agreed that it would have been highly improper for 'Mas' Jaspa' to have married Salome, indeed, not one of them, knowing who was her mother would have retained the least atom of respect for him had he done so, still, when speaking of her, and her visits to the ruin, the stories were always tinged with the jealousy that the dead girl must feel towards the woman who was the wife of her lover.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Don't you think he is much handsomer than any of his photographs?"

"Yes, very much. He has so much animation. There is a peculiar charm in the rapid changes of his face. His eyes seem to change color with his thoughts;" and Mrs. Fairfax drew her shawl a little closer about her, and fanned herself languidly. She looked at Zoe meditatively. In her mind's eye she saw her fair daughter in another white gown, and with orange blossoms, instead of a red red rose in her hair.

"Tell me what you think of him, Uncle Westlake;" and Zoe tapped his shoulder with her fan. Since she had awakened, about noon, she had talked of little else than Castlemere on this day after the dance. Her mother had been a sympathetic listener, but now that her father and her uncle were at home she began to wonder that they had no word of praise for the handsome foreigner.

Spoken to directly, Westlake said:

"The fellow's good looking, and I guess he's got money, and, he'll make his way wherever he goes. He's quite a little like Burgoyne, but,—"

"Oh Uncle! he doesn't seem to me in the least like Colonel Burgoyne. Does he to you manta?"

"Why dear, they are the same in some ways; both are tall and dark;—the same type you know, and

their features are something the same. Guido is only slighter, and their manners are different."

"The Count is one generation later," said Westlake. "He's had better training. As far as money goes, he's to all intents a born gentleman. Burgoyne has more the appearance of a self-made man, and as if he had got sick of the job before he put in his brains, and didn't mix enough to fill his big skull."

"Or as if," Fairfax interrupted, with a blink at his wife, "he had happened to be near an abattoir and had bundled in a hog's."

Zoe gave a shout of laughter and then, "Papa, I'm shocked. You have no regard for high station."

"If Burgoyne had only a little money he wouldn't seem half so vulgar," said Westlake.

"From battle and murder and sudden wealth, good Lord deliver us," Zoe mumbled, tapping her fingers with her fan.

"Zoe!" her mother exclaimed reprovingly.

"Mama, you remember those two families we met last year at White Sulphur, and how deplorably vulgar they were. I'm sure they would have been a very good sort of people if they had had no money, or not enough to make them pretentious."

"Their children will be the better for the experience of their parents; and no doubt their grand children will have quite outgrown their low origin, and will be fine strong characters."

"Yes, but the parents might have saved themselves many humiliations, if they're not too thick skinned to feel, if they had taken time to cultivate a few graces of mind while they were getting rich."

"My dear niece, war doesn't last forever, for which

the saints be praised, and those people you mention had to strike while the cannons were hot. The necessities of the country were their opportunity. They piled up their dollars while they were to be gathered, and now they go to White Sulphur, and the rest and offend the inherited and acquired tastes of the daughter of a hundred Fairfaxs."

"Do you really think mama, that it is only culture that makes Count Castlemere different from Colonel Burgoyne? It seems to me they never could have been in the least alike if they had always lived together, and always done the same things."

"I cannot say, my dear. One's surroundings make a great difference."

Westlake had continually watched Fairfax as he walked up and down the room with his hands thrown behind him. He had seemed not to notice what was said, but Westlake's habitual half smile broadened when Zoe said suddenly:

"Papa you haven't given us one word. Now, please to say, 'decisive and clear, without one if or but,' what you think of Count Castlemere."

Fairfax glanced at his brother-in-law, at his wife, and then, his gaze resting on his daughter, while a smile twitched the corners of his eyes, he said: "I think he's a nigger."

"Papa Fairfax!" and Zoe was out of her chair in a twinkling and seizing her father by his lapels held him still.

Westlake laughed uproariously. Mrs. Fairfax made a deprecating gesture with her fan, then laughed behind it to see her brother shed mirthful tears.

"Truly papa, you're joking?"

"Truly, I'm not. For the last year or two you've known what I think, what I've thought from the first of Mr. Burgoyne, ex-colonel, ex-consul, though he be. This boy is a relation of his, and, most probably he has a white father; but true to heredity, he is almost sure to be like his mother. Wait till we see her. He has all the marks of a mixture of races as plain as Burgoyne's, though he has been filtered through one more generation of white blood, and has had all that money can buy to tone down the black drop."

"Colonel, it is the oddest thing to me to see you pounce upon dark-haired people as you do. Marcia, it must have been your fair hair that caught him."

Mrs. Fairfax laughed, glancing at her husband and daughter as they walked up and down the length of the room together.

"Marcia knew the girl of my first love affair. Her hair was not dark; it was burnished copper."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fairfax, "her hair was very beautiful; the most peculiarly beautiful I ever saw."

"Her complexion was beautiful too. Her hair was the color of her father's with the silky kink of her mother's added. As soon as I knew beyond a doubt that she was not my cousin I wondered how I could have over-looked the strong marks of the negro. An experience of that sort I think would make an impression on any man. I, at least couldn't be fooled a second time."

"You might possibly be mistaken," said Mrs. Fairfax.

"I might, but I'd venture my bottom dollar and my ultimate acre on Burgoyne."

"Cousin Guido too, papa?" and Zoe dragged on his arm and smiled.

"Cousin Guido too, sweet. He's a later edition of the same story. The print is clearer, more easily read but the binding is the same: quarter morocco, with gilt edges."

"Oh papa! papa!" and Zoe turned to face her uncle who was laughing silently, and her mother who wore an apologetic smile.

"No my dear," Fairfax said seriously. "While Cousin Guido and his mother are guests of Mrs. Burgoyne, we must be civil to them. Mrs. Burgoyne, though weak, is a good woman. She's the salvation of the whole pack. I can't imagine how she happens to be there. But we want no more of these foreigners than is absolutely unavoidable."

This fiat threw a chill over the spirits of the family. Through all the years of the acquaintance with Colonel Burgoyne's household, though Mrs. Fairfax and her brother knew of the estimate put upon the head of the family by Colonel Fairfax, yet they never heard him object to the constant intercourse of the children. He was polite to Burgoyne, and exceedingly kind to the pale wife. This ingratiating young foreigner was a different matter.

There was a silence that came near being awkward. Then dinner was announced.

In the course of the rather dull evening, just as Zoe was beginning to hear again the dance-music spinning through her head, and was dreading the necessary preparations for bed, Westlake looked up from his newspaper, saying:

"Listen to this, Colonel, here's a chance for an

English title for you; at any rate, it's your name. This is the London letter in the Tribune."

"Yes? read it. Don't wait Zoe, dear, if you're sleepy."

"Oh I'm not so very sleepy, let me lean against you and hear too," and she pulled a hassock to her father's feet and leaned her head against his knee.

Westlake read:

"Here is a strange sad story of a title going a-begging and a fine estate about to revert to the Crown.

Three months ago there lived in Treslyn Castle Lord Treslyn, nearing his eightieth year, his son, Leigh Fairfax, about twenty five years younger, his wife, son and two daughters. Now, the octogenarian is the sole male representative of the house of Treslyn. The older son of Leigh Fairfax, also Leigh, had been married for some years, but had no children. Two and a half months ago, he was drowned by the wrecking of his yacht. This, while a terrible grief to the family, yet did not leave them desolate. There remained Guy, who was preparing to be married to the daughter of a fine old Scottish family. Four weeks ago his horse came home riderless, and the young man was found dead in one of the far corners of the park. It seemed the horse had shied at a ragged piece of paper, and Guy Fairfax, one of the most daring riders in England lay stone dead by a tree trunk, his head and face covered with his blood.

"When the mother was told of the terrible accident she fell in what was supposed to be a swoon, but she never opened her eyes again. The father went about, tearless, attending to all matters per-

taining to the sad time, speaking to no one, excepting when absolutely necessary, but breathing such sighs as breaks the heart, and exclaiming: "My sons! my sons! light of my eyes!"

"After the funerals were over he took to his bed with brain fever. He died on the ninth day. The two daughters remain, but by the terms of the entail they cannot inherit. Old Lord Treslyn sits in his castle with no near relation, if any to follow him. The daughters of the house always receive a liberal dower. At the death of their grandfather, the two Fairfax girls will be under the guardianship of the Crown. It is said that there is an American branch of the family, and Lord Treslyn will send his solicitor to look them up."

Fairfax was again walking the floor.

"Ah that is terrible! terrible!"

"Do you think, dear," Mrs. Fairfax asked "that they are your relations whom you visited?"

"The names are all correct, but, the whole story may be a fabrication. It doesn't seem possible."

"But, papa, suppose it is all true. Are you the next of kin?"

"Yes, as far as we knew. Let me see: It was two years before the war when I was there. Leigh Fairfax was as pleasant a man as one would care to meet. Lord Treslyn, then about sixty, or a year or two younger was jovial and hale, a fine rider, full of life as a boy of twenty, and dotingly fond of his grandchildren. They were little tots then. Our relationship was talked of until we knew the exact remove of cousin we were, and Leigh's two boys made great pretense of fear that I would steal them away and

drown them or hide them in the woods to starve so as to be Lord Treslyn myself some day."

"And now to think of it! Why Colonel, you're the luckiest man alive?"

"Yes, I reckon I'm lucky enough," and it was a strange smile that lit up his face as he drew a chair close to the table by which Westlake and Mrs. Fairfax sat.

"I'm lucky enough without being Lord Treslyn and inheriting that great estate."

"Why Jasper, you wouldn't refuse it?"

"I'll not be given the chance to refuse it."

"But, if there's no other?" and Mrs. Fairfax's brain whirled at the thought of that other Fairfax, and the possibility of her husband's abdication in his favor.

"I believe, and Lord Treslyn believed that I was in the direct line of succession after his grandsons. Until the breaking out of the war, I kept up a correspondence with Leigh Fairfax. We addressed each other affectionately, as cousin.

"The first Lord Treslyn received his title and land from the hands of Henry the VII, at the close of the Wars of the Roses. They were given as a reward for bravery, and devotion to his master and king. The Leigh Fairfax of that time is supposed to have been a plain yeoman, but, the story goes in the annals of the family that he was Henry's scout, and was a keen, sharp-witted fellow, entirely devoted to the man he believed to be king by the grace of God, against all others who claimed the title.

"So, at the final close of the war, Henry bestowed upon this rough-and-ready soldier the title of Lord

Treslyn, and an immense estate with the proviso that only sons should inherit because only men could be soldiers. A further proviso declared that if any Fairfax should be concerned in any least plot against the Government, in any least rebellious scheme, should, in the language of the Church engage in the very faintest shading of "sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion," then should he forfeit his title and estate if already in possession, or be deemed ineligible if heir-at-law. This proviso comprehends foreign born heirs if the English line should fail.

"Henry, it seems was so glad to get possession of his throne at last, that he meant only truly loyal men should profit by his gift."

"Do you think that cuts you out?"

"It certainly does. I saw the Charter and read it through. I was a faithful rebel in the late unpleasantness, so I can never be Lord Treslyn."

"How I wish I had a brother!"

"Yes, dear, I wish you had a brother; not especially to inherit this English fortune but for our own comfort and happiness in having one more nice person in the house; one more good Kentuckian and one more Fairfax to keep the farms."

Mrs. Fairfax and her brother exchanged glances, then Westlake said:

"I think Zoe, it would have been a fine thing if that Mr. Guy Fairfax had come over here and married you, and kept his head whole. Then you see the English and American farms would have been all in the family, and you'd have been Lady Treslyn. I'm afraid," and he laughed, closing one eye, "that papa

won't consent to you becoming Countess Castlemere."

"Oh bother Castlemere!" Zoe pouted, "I care more for papa Fairfax than I do for a title and all the rest of the world of men," and she leaned over the back of her father's chair, and twined her arms about his neck.

"That's papa's own baby!" he answered. "We want to hear nothing about titles and husbands for a long time. When a husband must come, we prefer an American; will be highly pleased with a Kentuckian, but will insist on a white man. Now, darling, good-night, and sweet dreams."

CHAPTER XXIII.

When Mrs. Fairfax found herself alone with her husband she ventured upon a subject that had been a sealed book between them for years. No second quarrel upon any matter had ever arisen between them, but she felt that in that one storm one half of all the romance of her married life had been swept away. Not that her husband had ever been unkind to her, not that he showed by word or deed that he remembered the quarrel, excepting in one way: He had thrown off her petty tyranny. He disposed of his time, in a measure without consulting her, or allowing her objections to interfere. When it had been a question of going away for the summer or winter, or making a trip anywhere, he would say readily, "Yes, we'll go," or "no, we cannot go," for such and such reasons. Or he would say: "This or that will be the very thing for you and Zoe. Go by all means and be comfortable. I'm going hunting, or fishing or to New York, or New Orleans. You'll probably feel lonely at home."

She could not longer insist that she must accompany him. Though she regretted this lost thread of dainty coloring from her life, yet in reviewing the matter she confessed to herself it had never really been there. Her husband had never believed in her to the extent she had supposed. He simply tolerated her constant presence.

He had carried that tell-tale photograph from the

battle of the Wilderness till the close of the war, and then it was hidden away with, she could guess with burning cheeks, what thoughts of herself, until the quarrel, that, she was honest enough to confess she had forced upon him.

When the picture was sprung upon her, she could scarcely believe her own senses. Since then, as often as she thought it all over she felt that it was a horrible nightmare. How she had posed as the single-hearted, worshiping wife! How she had always refrained from any least mention of betrothal or even of a casual admirer. Her husband had respected her reticence only, while she supposed he believed in her as she represented herself. After that night she thought how he must have despised her while he submitted to her caresses.

She never would have guessed how surprised he would have been at her summing up of the matter. He had had no unkind thoughts of her, neither before nor after the quarrel. The episode brought to light hidden things for her, not for him. He revealed her to herself. The revelation had been made to him long before. He did not despise her for having had a lover, and reading character as he did, neither did he despise the secrecy she maintained in regard to the lover. All pretty girls had admirers. He knew that Northern girls generally were not so surrounded by care as are Southern and European girls. He knew that Marcia Westlake had lived a peculiarly free, irresponsible life. This lover was only an incident. That this lover had been permitted to carry her picture to camp and field was not strange. The excitement of the times, the new and terrible sensa-

tions that were constantly sweeping over the country, awakened alien emotions, prompted rash behaviour. The parting hours of lovers were often fraught with such consequences as the longest life, the bitterest regrets might not efface.

All these excitements, these follies were labelled patriotism; devotion to the flag; fidelity to the soldiers.

If the enemy had been further away, across the sea, even beyond the boundary line of Canada, war would have worn a different aspect. The call to arms would not have been so imperative, nor would the country's defenders have received thanklessly so many sacrifices made for them.

Civil war is the greatest of all evils. The feuds amongst relations are the most stubborn.

So many old-time thoughts came to Mrs. Fairfax when she wished to speak to her husband in regard to the boy who bore his name. Assuming an air of carelessness as she took off her rings and unclasped a bracelet she said:

"Dear, do you regret very much your position during the war?"

"Regret!" he stopped short in the middle of the room, smiled interrogatively, then, "what a question! Why should I regret, after all these years?"

"Because of this English title and the fine property."

"Oh Marcia!" he came and sat near her. "How can you think it! Probably if I were very poor—I confess I wouldn't like to be poor, I might covet Lord Treslyn's position for the ease it would bring to me and mine; but, I worked for the Confederacy

because I thought we were right. I think so still. We suffered for the sins of our fathers, and the blacks have suffered too, and they'll continue to suffer. No, my wife, I have no regrets of the kind you are thinking."

"Suppose we had a son. Do you think the fact of you having borne arms against the Government would cut him off?"

"No, I think not," he answered slowly. "No, my behaviour would not jeopardize the claims of my son,—if I had a son, if he were not a party to my action."

"But dear, you have a son."

"Nobody but you has ever heard me say so, and no one else ever will."

"Why should you deny it?"

"I don't deny it, I simply ignore it. No one has ever mentioned it to me since Senator Francis' letter announcing the birth of the child excepting yourself and Cogswell. You remember his letter? During our visit in Washington that winter, he was quite anxious that I should see the boy. I told him that for me the boy did not exist; that I could not imagine circumstances that would make me care if he lived or died. I would not even turn my head to see him. The soreness of the quarrel with his mother, and the sting of defeat, were then, and are still with me. It may be a rascally feeling, but I'm honest enough to confess it; it would break my heart to have the son of Adelaide Francis, the grand-son of that haggling old demagogue, Archibald Francis, divide Fairfax Farms with Zoe."

Mrs. Fairfax's eyes brightened and a pink tinge

came into her cheeks. She leaned forward and kissed her husband fondly. A woman of deeper insight would have realized that the wounds must have been grievous to leave such lasting effects. There must have been something exceedingly sweet about this wife of a few weeks that the loss of her left such a rankling bitter.

"Then suppose Lord Treslyn comes seeking an heir. Will you tell him of this boy?"

"Not unless I'm cornered by some ferret of a lawyer."

"Why shouldn't you help him that much? It would take him out of the country beyond the possibility of making trouble."

"No, it would simply give him and his mother and his grandfather power. I know old Francis. He would hang me up by the thumbs until he had filched from me half I'm worth for the boy, and a good fat price for his maintenance all these years."

"Was nothing said of alimony at the time of separation?"

"All that was said was said by myself and Phil Jerome. He was then as now, in partnership with Cogswell. After I had vainly exhausted my rhetoric to induce Adelaide to forego the legal separation, I instructed Phil to agree to any terms she proposed,—give her anything she asked for. She asked for nothing, and even said she would resume her maiden name. I suppose she was advised to retain mine on account of the child. In case old Lord Treslyn makes inquiries, I'll answer what questions I must. I'll volunteer no information."

For several days the fatalities in the English Fair-

fax family, and the bearing of those fatalities on the fortunes of the American cousins, divided the interest felt in the recent arrivals from Madrid. Colonel Fairfax declared that, further than his sympathy for the family in their sorrow, he had no feeling in the matter. He wrote a long, kindly letter of condolence to Lord Treslyn and his grand-daughters, then waved away all mention of the whole affair.

Mrs. Fairfax and her brother, when alone together, discussed the probability of the young, un-acknowledged Jasper being sought out to take possession instead of allowing the title to die, the estate revert to the Crown. Zoe, knowing nothing of this half-brother never heard a whisper of him in connection with this inheritance; but she frequently remarked how fine it would have been to have visited these far-removed relations. Probably she could do so yet. Dr. Dorne had recommended a sea voyage for mama. Towards Spring she would talk to papa about it.

A few days after the London letter was published in the Tribune there was a copy of it in the Bellaire Chronicle. It had been re-written, and appeared, doubled-leaded in the local columns. It was further made interesting by the emphasis laid upon the fact of the relationship of Colonel Jasper Fairfax to this family, and, most astounding news of all the colonel was in the direct line of succession to the title and estate.

But, this cup full of wonders met with the traditional slip. By the Colonel's participation, on the wrong side, in the civil war, he had forfeited his rights to this inheritance.

Fairfax suspected his brother-in-law of the authorship of the article, or of putting himself in the way of being interviewed.

Senator Cogswell was one of the first of old friends to meet Fairfax and extend congratulations and condolences in the same breath. It was in the office of the Bellaire House as Fairfax was going in for noon luncheon. Others came up, Doctor Dorne amongst them.

"It's a great pity," said the doctor, "that since we had to lose, we had not lost without the war. The niggers were not worth it."

"The principles were," Fairfax answered.

"And see what you lost, and now, after all these years you are still losing;" from Cogswell.

"This English fortune I never possessed, so I can't lose it. It simply goes by me like a dissolving view. It's one of the might-have-beens. I'm not regretting it in the least. It's not as much as one pickaninny taken from me unjustly."

"They gave us good sound arguments against our possession of the pickaninnies, and the worst of it for us is they made their arguments stand."

"Yes, that's the sting of it. I suppose when this other class of fanatics who disbelieve in the ownership of land come and shovel our farms from under our feet, then again, might will be right. When still another army of long-haired, evil-odored preachers of non-resistance descend upon us, we'll be converted, stand still, and—let them thrash us black and blue. No, I thank you. I may be an old foggy, but I don't subscribe to these mischief-making fads. I stand by my rights and the rights of my state. I'm as good

a patriot as ever Hale was. I wish I had been a thousand rebels instead of only one."

Amongst the very few persons in Bellaire who knew there was another Jasper Fairfax, there was much speculation in regard to his chances of coming into this estate forfeited by his father; but these speculations were in whispers, as if even the name of Adelaide Francis held reproach in it. After deserting her husband and the South as she had done, the most becoming thing for her was just what she was doing: Keeping herself and her son out of the sight of old friends.

Nothing in the world over-rides the supremacy of trifles—small matters of social life. Now, for Zoe Fairfax the four deaths in the family of her English relations, and the more than four years that her father had passed in arms against the Federal Government were nothing as compared with the importance of receiving formal party calls from girls and their mothers whom she had always known, and had heretofore visited without ceremony. Now she must have a specified day at home, and handsome reception dresses.

She and her mother went in state to call upon the Countess Castlemere. In all her life she had never seen a woman one half so magnificent. The Countess was actually imposing in size, though she showed no superfluous flesh. Her complexion was like ivory, her eyes dark and lustrous, her hair snow-white.

When Mrs. Burgoyne presented Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter, the Countess extended her beautiful hand with its flashing rings, and greeted the mother as any well-bred woman acknowledges an introduc-

tion. Her voice was soft and full, and she spoke with a very pronounced foreign accent. She drew Zoe to a low chair beside her own, and still holding her hand, said; "Ah my Guido was right: the prettiest girl in the world!"

Zoe colored under the steadfast gaze of the dark eyes, but, she felt that the praise of so gracious a lady was infallible sanction of all the flatteries she had ever received. She talked but little during the call. Sally's flashes of wit were lost upon her friend for once. She sat beside the Countess, listening to her charming voice, basking in the splendor of her great brown eyes, and wondering at the magnificence of her dress.

The glamour of this influence remained with her all the evening. Usually so outspoken in her preferences, voluble in praises of persons or things that pleased her, at dinner and afterwards she was exceedingly quiet. To the questioning of her father and the rallying of her uncle concerning the Countess, she answered very earnestly, but in a subdued tone:

"Oh she's magnificent! I cannot describe her. She's a verified dream of all the beauty, all the grandeur of all women. She's Semiramis, Zenobia, Cleopatra. All descriptive words are weak when applied to the Countess Castlemere."

"Ah listen! listen!" from her father as he and Westlake exchanged broad smiles. "How is it mama, is this cousin of John Burgoyne, this mother of that young jumping-Jack, such a paragon?"

Mrs. Fairfax laughed softly: "The countess is certainly a very handsome woman. Colonel Bur-

goyne is handsome too, and Count Guido is a model for a sculptor as far as symmetry and expression go."

"Leaving out the question of color?" Fairfax interpolated.

"Yes, leaving out the question of color,—as you see it. The countess is tall and large, like Colonel Burgoyne. Her white hair gives her a strikingly distinguished appearance;—"

"I wonder who bleached it for her," Westlake interrupted. "Zoe, wouldn't you like to see her pictures as a 'Before' and 'After'? I fancy daddy here could make them. The first would be black and as kinky as Ceely's."

"Uncle Westlake, I'll never believe anything so absurd of Countess Castlemere. She's as white as I am."

Fairfax laughed as he felt the toe of Westlake's boot touch his own, then he said: "We interrupted mama. After the white hair,—if it's a triumph of the bleacher or the wig-maker, let it pass. What next?"

"The Countess certainly clothes herself in great splendor." Mrs. Fairfax smiled and looked at Zoe as if asking her pardon; then continuing: "In fact her profusion of jewels and the richness and showiness of her dress seemed to me, bordering a little on barbarism."

"Just so!" Westlake said emphatically: "Semi-remis, Zenobia, Cleopatra, and, the Queen of the Cannibal Islands!"

Zoe's admiration of the Countess was not weakened by anything that was said. The family, after some pleasant raillery, dropped the subject, knowing

how an unsophisticated girl may be dazzled even by inappropriate magnificence in an older woman.

However, a week or two after this call, Fairfax and Westlake, coming home one evening a short half hour earlier than usual, encountered in the parlor, only lit by the blazing logs in the fire-place, Mrs. Burgoyne, Sally, the countess and her son.

They were rising to go. Mrs. Fairfax presented her husband and her brother. Each clasped for an instant the gloved hand, each exchanged a few pleasant, formal, common-place remarks. Neither wondered at Zoe's infatuation.

Westlake afterwards declared to his sister and her husband: "Why she's a regular battery. A few claspings of that strong hand of her's, a few glances from those ox-eyes, a few words in the voice that seems to rise from the polished heels of her handsome boots, and, at the lifting of her finger she'd lead a fellow to heaven or hell, whichever way she happened to be going at the moment."

Mrs. Fairfax laughingly declared it "all nonsense." She was quite impervious to such an influence. Her brother said, "Because there's nothing wicked enough about you to meet it." She could not even understand why Zoe should admire the countess so extravagantly.

Fairfax said: "She's certainly a magnificent woman as to size, symmetry, even coloring and costuming, but, she's masquerading. There's something unreal about her. In some way, in some degree, she's a fraud. Being Burgoyne's cousin brands her a fraud in the matter of breeding. She's mixed and she knows it. She never forgets it. She probably

deceived the man she married in regard to her origin. Or, it may be, that, dazzled by her beauty and her wealth, I believe they say she was rich in her own right, nobleman though he was, he winked at so small a matter as a drop more or less of Afro-American blood. Europeans generally, and impoverished heirs of titles particularly, think less of these things than we do. Whatever or whoever she is, I wish she had stayed in Madrid with that impish son. I don't like to see Zoe so charmed with them. They influence her more than any people we have ever met!"

"Well, my dear," and Mrs. Fairfax fluttered her fan nervously, "if it were not for your settled conviction that these people are—not—white, I'm sure I should not mind,"—she hesitated, looked appealingly from her husband to her brother and back again.

"Oh Marcia! What do we know of them, only that we—don't care to know them?"

"But they are relations of ex-consul Burgoyne. Is high place in Governmental circles to count for nothing?"

"For nothing and worse in this case. Let us say nothing more about it, only this: I want it distinctly understood that I am uncompromisingly opposed to any degree of intimacy between Zoe and these foreigners. Of course, they being at Burgoyne's and their family and ours being on the friendly terms that they are, we cannot cut off from them; but, Zoe must never, on any account go out with this fellow without a chaperon. Never send her to Burgoyne's alone, or even with one of the servants that he may have an excuse to ride or drive home with her.

Never on any pretext leave them alone together. She's bewitched. I disliked the fellow the first glimpse I had of him. I dislike him more since seeing his mother, hearing her flatteries of Zoe, and watching her manner. Why she's exerting her influence, I read like a page of long primer. They may be poor in spite of her magnificence, in spite of the reports of John Burgoyne. Poverty, I wouldn't mind. I wouldn't object to making some worthy young American rich by giving him my daughter and Fairfax Farms. What I do object to is—these—black-amoores, of whom all we know is objectionable."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The birthday dance at Fairfax Farms was the opening of a very gay season for Bellaire and vicinity. The presence of Countess Castlemere and her son had much to do with it. Though Burgoyne's neighbors, without an exception fully believed him to be an ex-slave, still, he was in a position to make himself necessary. He was accepted as a part of the reconstruction of the Union. Much blacker men were the equals, before the law, of the bluest blood in the States. So now, the Burgoyne place was very gay. The whole house-full went everywhere. Sometimes Colonel Fairfax wondered that he saw so little of the Countess Castlemere. Westlake danced with her, was paired with her at dinners, sat in corners and talked with her until gossips began to say, "The old bachelor is caught at last;" but his brother-in-law rarely more than greeted her formally. Not that he was conscious of trying to avoid her, but it always seemed to happen that if they met, something or somebody interrupted any attempt at conversation. Fairfax never supposed that the countess maneuvered to avoid him until the evening of a formal dinner Mrs. Fairfax gave in her honor. Sitting at his right, after a few attempts to interest her, he found that she would not talk to him but gave her whole attention to Mr. Cogswell. After that he accepted the fact that the countess avoided him, without caring why she did so. If he had been compelled to give a reason he

would have said, "probably it is because I don't believe in her, and instinctively she knows it."

There was a continual round of dinners, teas, dances, charade parties, and mask balls. These last came after the Holidays were over when everybody was a trifle weary and thought of Ash Wednesday with feelings of relief. In the masquerades there was one draw-back for Zoe. Her father would not allow her, upon any pretext, to keep him in ignorance of the character she assumed. In vain she plead with him to try for once if he could detect her amongst fifty other flower girls, sheperdesses, Sisters of Charity, queens, gypsies, ghosts and peasants. He vowed he could not consent to have his enjoyment of the evening marred by the least doubt of her identity. If he saw a girl stealing away to a shadowy nook with an unknown cavalier to listen to he knew not what nonsense, or sitting and talking out too many dances, or flirting on the stairs, or in the conservatory, he did not want to be tortured by the inquiry: 'Is that Zoe?'

No, she must show herself to him before going. He would leave her at the dressing-room door with her mother and the maids. He would receive her there within so short a time as to make change impossible. Though he talked lightly of these matters, Mrs. Fairfax knew he was very much in earnest. Though he said nothing more of his dislike and distrust of Countess Castlemere and her son since the first, yet the family knew that the dislike and the distrust were still in existence, augmented by time, continual contact and the undisguised flatteries of the countess.

Young Castlemere was very popular as was but natural. He was thoroughly cosmopolitan. Besides his readiness in all fashionable indoor pastimes, he was a most daring athlete, a bold rider, an expert in all sports of wood and field. He had known recreations of which the natives of this mild climate had only read and wondered. He had skated over the shining surface of ponds and canals with rosy-cheeked Holland girls. He had climbed along the edges of precipices with picturesque Swiss maidens. He had fished in the swirling streams with short-petticoated Norwegians. He was so boyish, so thoroughly good natured, so full of life. Only on one subject was he serious. One fair-haired American girl had taken the place of all that had gone before. To Sally Burgoyne he declared that Zoe Fairfax was all he had ever dreamed of girlish loveliness. He was not obtuse, nor myopic. He could see that Colonel Fairfax did not approve of him. At first he was inclined to think it was only the jealousy natural to a high-class, wealthy father of an only daughter, but, he noted the manner of the colonel towards other young men.

He was wise, this Spanish Adonis and he wisely counselled with his mother. He was all deference to the father, all tender attention to the daughter. He never sought to inveigle her into a tete-a-tete. His words were the merest common-places, but there was a world of meaning in the finely modulated tones. If he touched her hand he did it as if receiving a favor from a queen. The dark eyes continually sought hers, continually expressed to her what he did not dare to put into words.

He was sure he was understood;—understood by the daughter, but, the father—?

When Castlemere was alone, or with his mother he laughed, throwing back his handsome head and showing his fine teeth. He was sure, so was his mother, that the father was being hoodwinked.

Colonel Fairfax, watching this social panorama distinctly saw the trend of affairs; but there was nothing to which he could openly object. He saw Castlemere's eloquent glances, and he read the answer on the flushing cheeks, in the veiled flashes from the forget-me-not eyes of his daughter. He would say to himself as he paced the long parlors: "I'm an old stager. It might be something to my comfort if I had not so often watched the shadowings of love's coming. It may be only fancy on Zoe's part. Half the girls in the county are ready to fall at the feet of this fascinating fraud, for fraud of some degree he undoubtedly is. I'll take Zoe and her mother to England in the Spring, as soon as it's pleasant to cross the water. Marcia is not well. She's over-doing. In the meantime I must see that no irreparable mischief is done. Zoe may think herself in love with this—*thing*; but, change will be all that's necessary to change her mind."

So, one thing that Colonel Fairfax opposed whenever it was mentioned was that Zoe should disguise herself from him at a masked dance. Neither would he consent to a plan that she and Fanny Jerome concocted on one occasion of dressing precisely alike. This was for the mystification of Castlemere and Clay Jerome.

It was on an informal evening in the Fairfax par-

lor, that the two young men who had grown to be very warm friends agreed to dress as Faust and Mephistopheles at a mask ball to be given at Burgoyne's, very soon. To the question of the girls as to which character each would assume, on the impulse of the moment they refused to tell. The matter may not have been decided, but, when Clay's fingers lightly touched Guido's arm, as Fanny asked who was to wear the scarlet, the hint was given. At once it was declared that that should be the secret. They ought not to have mentioned it at all, but now the girls might know that much, and everybody might know it. It would be something new for their friends to know, and yet not know. The two were the same height, the same figure. Ah! it would be the prize puzzle.

The most adroit questions of the girls were parried. The young men laughed but remained firm. The subject was dropped, then returned to abruptly, all with no avail.

The next day Fanny called upon Zoe all excited with her little plan to outwit her brother and Castle-mere. It was to dress themselves precisely alike; to be two Marguerites.

Zoe clapped her hands and springing from her chair she pirouetted about the room, employing some of the many new and graceful poses she had learned from Guido and Sally. This, then would be their secret. The young men had jokingly wondered if they would find Marguerite. What would be their surprise when they should discover two, exactly alike. The trifling difference in height and figure of

the two girls could be cancelled by the dress and boot-makers.

That evening at dinner Zoe told the family of the costume she had decided upon for the Burgoyne fancy dress ball. Her surprise and grief were overwhelming when, after her mother had applauded the idea, after her uncle had declared it was a check-mate for the boys, her father resolutely declared:

"No daughter; that won't do,—not for a minute. I wouldn't object to you going as the fair German maid, but, not as a duplicate. Why, only think of it! I might be caught whispering to Fanny some of the nonsense I talk to you. I might pinch her fingers or kiss her chin below her mask. So many imprudent things you and I indulge in! Think of the consequences!

Zoe laughed but there were tears in her eyes: "Oh papa, Fanny wouldn't mind, she'd know it was you."

"But dear me! Ask mama if she wouldn't mind, and, are you so sure I want to make love to Fanny even by mistake?"

"But papa, I'd give you a sign whenever I came near you."

"Then the boys would see you, and all would be lost."

"Oh I had so set my heart on it," Zoe sighed.

"How would it do," Mrs. Fairfax asked, "to let the girls go on with their joke and dress alike excepting the flowers they wear?"

"Why mama, I'm sure Clay and Guido would see the difference at once."

"We wouldn't mind that so much. I was making the suggestion for papa's comfort."

"But you see we want to mystify them completely, so that even if they guess who we are, as they probably would, they wouldn't know which one of the Marguerites they were dancing with."

"Let your uncle settle it;" said Westlake. "Wear the same kind and color of flowers; but not one person in a hundred would think to notice how many flowers you wear. Suppose Zoe puts a red red rose in each side of her hair, and two on her corsage. Let Fanny wear one rose on one side of her head, two on the other and three on her corsage."

"That wouldn't be half bad," Fairfax assented, but what a problem for an anxious father to keep in his head! My girl wears four red roses, and as every one supposes,—now see! Why such things have sent men raving. Then only imagine if I get it all mixed and say six instead of four."

"Oh but papa, you won't; you have a good memory we may go on with it?"

"Of course you will;" said Westake. "Dad and I will occasionally remind each other that you are the Big Four, and Fanny's the Invincible Six."

As the time for the ball drew near Clay Jerome vainly questioned his sister as to the character she meant to assume. Her answer was: "Tell me; are you to be Faust or Mephistopheles?"

Then he besieged his mother and his grandmother Cogswell. No satisfactory answer was given.

He called upon Zoe, and, as the ball was the one subject of interest, he said carelessly:

"Fanny's costume is going to be very pretty."

Usually Zoe was the most impulsive creature alive,

but upon this one subject she was prudent. She answered:

"Yes? What is it?" and drew a step nearer as if she fully expected a confidence.

Clay smiled in a way he meant to be sly, saying: "Pshaw Zoe, you know all about it. There need be no reserve between you and me."

"No," she answered, lounging on the arm of a chair, "and since we both know all about it, there's nothing to tell; no need of talking it over. You know some folks talk best on subjects of which they know nothing. They can indulge their imagination. Have you any talent in that line?"

Clay laughed and said good bye. He knew he was understood.

This ball was declared the most successful of the season. Everybody was masked. The rooms were crowded, the halls overflowing; the stairs were a thoroughfare for ascending and descending parties, or for loiterers to gaze upon the scene below.

The two Marguerites were greeted with exclamations as they entered together, convoyed by a tall black domino. Instantly they were besought by Faust and Mephistopheles and they were placed vis-à-vis in the same quadrille. It was more of a play for the graceful Dr. Faust and his ally in scarlet than a dance. They were almost constantly together and when separated, communicated by a series of signals. That they suspected at once the identity of the two Marguerites was conveyed to each other in pantomime.

But which was Fanny, and which was Zoe? They stood gazing at the girls and waiting for the dance

to begin. Suddenly the man in scarlet raised his hand with the four fingers outspread. The girls, with downcast eyes, were demurely fingering their rosaries. This was a part of their plan of action. When not dancing, they would follow each other's every motion.

Doctor Faust answered the gesture of his ally, and Mephisto with a glance and a quick movement of his fingers directed attention to the flowers worn by the Marguerite beside him. Then he raised two others fingers, and pointed to the duplicate who stood beside himself. The difference was discovered. The tall black domino who had come in with the girls stood not far away, and he gave no sign that the pantomime had been seen and understood. The figure moved quietly away, and where there were so many back dominos, one more or less was not noticeable.

Very soon after that Doctor Faust said to Mephisto, "Who is that noble Roman?"

"Have no idea. He's just come in. One of these big dominos is Colonel Fairfax. What I want to know is, which Marguerite is his daughter, and which your sister."

"Keep your eye on the domino that came in with them. He'll keep close and dance with each one soon. Can't you make the girls talk?"

"Not a word. If the Colonel would move away, I'd try something daring."

"Don't be rash," with a laugh.

If the two German maids had been real mutes they could not have been more silent. They, however, were at once satisfied as to the identity of the young men. The tall black dominos, there were at least a

half dozen, and one and all seemed for awhile to have forgotten the girls. Then two of them marched together and invited the Marguerites to dance. Not one word was spoken.

Faust and Mephisto watched closely, but they could not say which was Colonel Fairfax. The girls were again vis-a-vis, and in one of the changes of the dance Zoe whispered to Fanny, "Neither one of these is papa."

"How do you know?"

"Oh I'm sure! It isn't his touch nor his motion."

Bye and bye came the stately Roman and took the maid of four roses from the arm of Mephistopheles as they were passing into the hall. He looked at her tablet. The next dance was a minuet. He wrote his name, Virginius, and led her to her place. The dance begun, and every movement, every touch of her partner's hand spoke to Zoe. She smiled behind her mask, and as Virginius lightly touched her fingers in the graceful measure she whispered "Papa." Below the music and the rhythmic tap-tap of feet came the answer: "Hush darling: Nobody knows, not even mama."

Next the Roman danced with the other Marguerite, then with a Night maiden, then with a Nun. He danced continually but managed to stay in the neighborhood of the Marguerites.

Presently the two girls stood idly together, and not far away were Faust and Mephistopheles. The Roman, a few steps away made the third point of a triangle

There was a lull in the music, and a great hum of conversation began. There was a swift pantomime

between Faust and Mephisto, and the Roman followed the eyes of the two. He discerned at once what was meant. The girl who had worn three roses on her corsage had but two. He changed his position. Each girl had a single rose on each side of her head. He first thought that this was an accident. The stems had broken,—but Mephistopheles in answer to a question from his ally took from his vest a quantity of loose leaves and scattered them on the floor. At the same time, he attracted the attention of the girls and showed them that their little difference of costume was obliterated.

The Marguerite whose roses had been purloined put her hands quickly to her bosom, then to her hair, but, the other seriously followed her motions and the Roman laughed to see the nonplussed air of Faust and his scarlet ally. The difference had been discovered and spoiled, but was it of any use?

The girls could not tell, but the Roman caught an inadvertent glance, an involuntary movement of Mephistopheles toward himself. Then, he not only fully understood that Zoe had been identified by Guido, but that his own disguise had been penetrated. The roses had been removed to cheat him. But, could this deft-handed, quick witted Afro-Spaniard (so he called him in his thought), take from him the apple of his eye and he be unconscious of it?

He looked at the two girls standing side by side. He wondered that anyone could mistake one for the other. He stepped quickly behind them, put a hand on a shoulder of each, said close to the cheek of one; "Daughter take off your mask now; you've fooled Mephisto and the doctor long enough."

At the same moment he uncovered his own face, and the man in scarlet, as if under an influence he could not resist slowly drew off his mask.

There was a quick exchange of glances between him and Zoe. A wave of color swept over her face. Then the eyes of Fairfax and Castlemere met. It was a steady gaze while one might have counted five ticks of a clock, but each read the other. Fairfax knew that in the dark eyes that met his own above his daughter's head, there was a glint of defiance. He knew too that he was in the minority; that in her heart Zoe was plighted to this handsome, dashing stranger.

Castlemere, on his part saw more plainly than ever before, antagonism to himself as a suitor for Zoe. Heretofore he had been governed by his mother's counsel. He had masked his intentions under the most delicate diplomacy. Now, this night, when all were masked, the secret stalked abroad bare-faced. Colonel Fairfax in his carefully arranged disguise had run to earth the two young maskers, but, he too had been discovered. Hereafter, instead of the polite neighborliness, the masterly finesse on his part, and the deferential acquiescence, the graceful yielding of the young count, it would be open warfare.

Each felt a sort of relief. The thought of the father was: "I'll plan a trip somewhere immediately. I'll get the child away as soon as possible. We ought to leave all this bustling and fussing for Marcia's sake. How pallid and weary she looks!"

A half hour after, all masks were removed, and the lover said to a magnificent Cornelia: "I think Senor

Fairfax took great labor upon himself to watch the pretty daughter. He has been assured of something without spoken words, and it doesn't please him."

Cornelia laughed softly, gazing into her son's eyes: "Ah my Guido, shall you not have whatever you desire, even if be Fairfax Farms?"

CHAPTER XXV.

"I want a vote on going to New Orleans in time for the Mardi gras." Colonel Fairfax said at the dinner table the next evening after the masquerade.

"Good idea!" Westlake answered. "I'm ready."

Mrs. Fairfax looked surprised but remained silent and Zoe gasped: "Oh papa!"

"Why such consternation?"

"I am surprised; and, we have so many engagements."

"Well; Marcia," turning directly to Mrs. Fairfax, "nothing to say? Are these engagements so exceedingly important?"

"They are certainly important from one point of view. We must keep them excepting something of greater importance presents itself. Seeing Mardi gras in New Orleans is an old story. If it were going to Rome for the Carnival;" and she paused with a rising inflection.

"If we had time, we might go to Rome."

"I shouldn't like to cross the water at this season."

"No that wouldn't be advisable; but, really dear, you ought to rest."

"Lent will soon be here, then I'll rest without going away."

"Why do you wish to go papa, because mama isn't well?"

"We're not going to frighten mama, but Dr.

Henry doesn't seem to strike the right thing for her cough."

"Mama says it's only a cold, and we're all having such a good time."

"Yes, but this good time is a much older story than Mardi gras in New Orleans. I'm dead tired. I'd like a slow trip down the Mississippi, finding each day the air growing milder, the scenery more tropical.

"Oh papa, I'm sorry,—you wouldn't like to go alone?"

"No indeed; but I'll go if you'll go with me. Mardi gras isn't an old story to you. We can invite Fanny Jerome, or any one or two or a half dozen girls to go with us."

"No boys?" and Zoe shook her head slowly, smiling and coloring.

"No boys, most emphatically. It's the flirting element in this good time we're having that wearies me."

"Papa, to go away now would be to miss the annual tea at Dr. Ballantyne's. You know how feeble he's growing, and how sensitive he is. I wouldn't like to seem to treat him unkindly."

"Very well, we'll wait until after the tea, and talk about it again."

Talking about it again only brought to light real reasons for going and not going. Mrs. Fairfax first made a plea against the expense of a traveling outfit in the transition season. Then the risk to health was enlarged upon. She and Zoe were both weary with their social duties; in no state to be starting upon a journey.

"For that very reason I wish to go," her husband answered. "For your sake particularly there ought to be a season of absolute rest. I'll wager you are fifteen pounds lighter than you've been within the last twenty years. The loss of that much flesh from a slender body like yours, means danger."

"Don't worry; my dresses are made from the same measure I've used for—twenty years, probably."

"You don't fill them dear, and look at that." He lifted her hand by the finger tips, and held it against the light. "It reminds me of those skeleton leaves the girls were messing with last summer."

His arguments, his kindly tenderness were of no avail. At his wits end he thought for a moment of exerting warrantable authority, and saying, "We will go on such a day. Try to be ready," but, looking at his wife's thin, flushed face, noticing how carefully she used her voice so as not to provoke that rasping cough, he said:

"Dear, if not for your own sake, then for Zoe. I have no more desire to leave home than you have, and, if you were taking proper care of yourself, I think you'd soon be better; but for Zoe's sake, let us go. To wean her from this daily increasing infatuation for Castlemere; to give her new subjects of thought, new people, new scenery. For this reason I wish to go, and go quickly."

She listened in silence till he was quite done. Then, "Jasper, I really think you are unreasonable. I cannot see that Guido gives Zoe any more attention than is fitting under the circumstances."

"But, my dear, you know how much I, at least deplore the circumstances. If it were not for the way

in which we have lived with Burgoyne's family for the last ten years, that frisking Jackanapes should never set foot in my house."

"You will probably think it very foolish of me, to say that you are very much prejudiced."

"No, not foolish if you think so; but I've told you from the first why I object to Castlemere."

"There is where your prejudice blinds you. You fancy there's a taint in his blood."

"Fancy! I wish I might be as sure of an immortal soul as I am that somewhere in the not remote history of this fellow and his mother there was a darkey."

Mrs. Fairfax frowned, and dropped her clasped hands on her lap with a gesture of impatience.

"I dare say, if any young man we know should approach Zoe as a lover you'd object to him, for some reason."

"No, you're mistaken. I know a full half dozen estimable boys, sons of old friends, boys I've known since their birth, and whose fathers and mothers I've known all my life. That sort of lover, or husband for Zoe I should not object to."

"Well I must confess, "Mrs. Fairfax said airily, and she smiled while a pink line grew at the edges of her eyelids; "I must confess I have more ambition for our daughter than that she shall marry a village clown."

"If she's to marry a clown at all I prefer one of whose antecedents we know. In the same measure that these boy friends are clowns, so is Zoe's father, your husband, a clown. We've had the same surroundings, we've been educated in the same schools

and colleges. If there is any difference it is in favor of the later generation."

"To say the very least, then, there's no young man amongst our friends whom I would prefer before the young Count Castlemere."

"He may be a count, and he may not be; but for that I care not one copper. It's the man I object to."

"I cannot see how you can object to him in the abstract, leaving out your notion of mixed blood. He's very finely educated, his manners are faultless. He knows books and he knows the world. He's travelled everywhere."

"So has Prax, my valet, travelled everywhere that I have. The tent pitchers of a circus are great travellers too. I know of all the advantages this Afro-Spaniard has had, and, in spite of them all, I set my face against the matter of him presuming to address Zoe."

Fairfax had been walking up and down the room. Now he stood before his wife and looked down at her as he continued: "You are here at home with her. It is your office to see to it that there is no privacy in his calls."

"There has been no privacy. Count Castlemere, in accordance with the usage of his country will, undoubtedly speak to you before he allows Zoe to suspect that he loves her. He would perhaps think you presumptuous if he knew how you regard him. What I fear is that will not condescend to Zoe."

"You—fear—he—will—not—condescend? Good God! You have reached that point?"

Mrs. Fairfax rose from her chair.

"Don't stand over me like that! I've tried to

reason with you, but you are too stubborn, too much tied down by your own opinions and your own prejudices to listen to reason. Zoe is mine as well as yours. I expect to have a word to say in regard to her settlement in life. The first thing to be considered is her happiness. If, as you suspect, her affections are engaged, and if your other suspicion is based on truth, that Count Castlemere cares for her, they have my full consent to be happy together."

While Fairfax listened to his wife, every vestige of color left his face. He scarcely breathed, so great was his astonishment. He felt as he might if the floor had suddenly given way beneath him. He was recalled to his senses by Mrs. Fairfax sinking into a chair, and writhing in a paroxysm of coughing. He quickly brought her remedies from her sleeping room, administered them, and wiped the beads of perspiration from her face. Two things he knew now for a certainty: Talking was useless, worse, it was harmful. He rang the bell for Ceely, then:

"I've kept you up too long, dear; be sure to have Ceely do everything that Henry requires. Good night."

It was in the midst of the Lenten season and there were no balls now, nothing but teas, and lean lunch parties. But, something must be done to fill the time. Often when Colonel Fairfax came home from business there was the sound of music in the house, and there were to be seen, Zoe at the piano and near her Castlemere with the broad embroidered ribbon of his guitar crossing his shoulder. Sometimes Sally Burgoyne assisted with her mandolin or in a piano duet. In some nook of the place would be seated

Mrs. Fairfax and the countess, perhaps Mrs. Burgoyne. There were always some one or two of the family with the young man, and he and Zoe were never actually alone together. But, their music was absorbing. They were not interrupted in practicing it, nor in their talking it over.

The father, noting these things would not have been surprised to have the young foreigner approach him "in accordance with the usage of his country." Until that happened, he must remain passive. He shrunk from speaking seriously to Zoe, and, not one more word to his wife. She seemed to grow thinner, more languid, each day. He hoped that Zoe might see the man in his real character. So, he made no more open objection to him. He feigned indifference, masking as he could his contempt.

The Countess was talking of going away soon; where she did not know. She and her son knew of many pleasant retreats in many lands. They talked to Zoe and her mother of going with them, but this Mrs. Fairfax knew she dare not think of.

Fairfax, hearing of this proposed flitting, watched the coming of the Spring with impatience. He wished he might for one instant seize the glass of time and shake it till the burning sun of July should suddenly glow in the heavens. He hoped that Castlemere was only amusing himself. If he went away without formally declaring himself, Zoe might be disappointed, but, she would forget him; she must forget him. Never had girl so devoted a father in place of an unworthy admirer as he would be to her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The farmers called it an early Spring. Easter Sunday was balmy, and odorous with the blossoms of fruit trees, the budding of beech and maple, with young grass and clover, and the pervading scent of fresh earth from plowed fields. The young year was full of promise.

It was the middle of the week after Easter that Colonel Fairfax sat in his office idly gazing out of the open window. His mind was continually on the rack. The visitors at Burgoyne's place still tarried, still frequented his own house. He had spoken to Mrs. Fairfax about plans for the summer, but she replied evasively. He asked Zoe in her presence if she would like to cross the water, and she too gave an indirect reply. Only this morning there had been one of these unsatisfactory conversations at the breakfast table. Nothing had been determined upon, and soon after the colonel and Westlake left the house together.

Before they reached the gate, Fairfax said: "If 'twere not for Marcia's state of health, I'd decide this matter in a hurry."

"Seems to me for that very reason you ought to decide it."

"I don't believe you know how weak she's grown; and any excitement brings on those terrible paroxysms of coughing. Henry fears hemorrhage."

"What does he say about change of air?"

"Very little. He advises quiet, ease of mind and

all that. It's what he doesn't say that troubles me. I'm afraid he has no hope, and feels that she may be more comfortable at home."

"That's very often the case."

"I believe mountain air would be beneficial, but I can't force her to go."

There was a sharp clatter of hoofs, and around a bend in the road came Sally Burgoyne, and her cousin on horseback. Sally drew rein, and asked gaily if Zoe would be ready.

"I think so," Fairfax answered, not deigning to mention that he knew nothing of the day's program. As the young riders passed on, he asked Westlake: "Do you know where they are going?"

"Not I, but of course Marcia knows."

Fairfax muttered a curse. Westlake quoted: "I do not like you Doctor Fell."

"I know why I don't like this fellow. I wish I could persuade myself that Marcia is right,—that I am prejudiced. However, I hope they'll soon be gone."

They rode on in silence. It was a bad beginning of the day, but, there was no sign of perturbation on the handsome face of the president of the bank as he greeted his co-workers. He took up the business of the morning, and worked at it resolutely for an hour, then suddenly, as if some bolt or pulley in the mental machinery had refused to work, he stopped. He could not have told how long he had sat gazing out of the window and seeing nothing when one of the clerks came in and handed him a card. He took it and read:

Goeffrey Carleton Q. C.

London, England.

Only for an instant he wondered what it could mean; then came the remembrance of his kindred across the sea. All these months he had been so absorbed in his immediate surroundings he had forgotten, for the time, the grief in Treslyn Castle. When the door opened again he rose to meet a large, robust, typical Englishman. Fair and florid, side-whiskered and bald. That much was to be seen at a glance. The two men, whose eyes were on a level, clasped hands, and mentally took each other's measure.

As the lawyer seated himself he said abruptly: "Colonel Fairfax I wish in my soul that you were yourself the heir I am seeking for the Treslyn title and estate."

"Thank you for your good wishes. I am not covetous. Since I am not the heir, what can I do for you?"

"A very great favor; and yet a mere technicality. We've been delayed owing to the feebleness of Lord Treslyn. Miss Fairfax and her sister knew of the receipt of a letter by their grandfather from an American cousin who, they said visited them when they were children.

"Yes," the colonel assented, "and Leigh Fairfax and I carried on a correspondence for two years or more."

"Not one scrap of a letter could be found amongst his papers. He was careless of such matters."

"One must be sometimes. Letters accumulate and become a nuisance. I doubt if I have one of his."

"Your letter last winter to Lord Treslyn also disappeared, and the broken old man could not remember in what spot of this great continent you lived. However, he remembered your baptismal name, as did Miss Fairfax. We tried 'personals' in several New York papers without results. As a last resort I wrote to the secretary of the British Legation at Washington who is a friend of mine. He has been in Washington for fifteen years. His answer was, that for some time he had known a boy named Jasper Fairfax; that, struck by his personnel, he had inquired into his history. He learned that he was the son of a widow, that they were poor, but of excellent family, and a few other unimportant matters.

"I had always had a great desire to visit America. In this case I was quite sure that a personal investigation would be more satisfactory, as well as more economical of time than correspondence. Time is of consequence. Lord Treslyn is failing rapidly. He wishes most anxiously that his successor should be there before his death. I believe the conditions of the charter too make some such requirement. At least the passing lord must be cognizant of his successor.

"Upon my arrival in Washington I very easily traced the young man described. I find him a most estimable youth; a son any father might be proud of. I found too, that his mother is not a widow save by the grace of the law. Further I discovered that this young man is the son of the cousin who is remembered by Lord Treslyn and his grand-daughters; and

who, according to the charter of the title has forfeited both it and the estate. The young man's mother, a most charming woman, gave me the whole history of the sad affair. Believe me, Colonel Fairfax you have my heartiest sympathy."

"Thank you," was answered stiffly.

"Now what we want of you, Colonel, as I said before, is the merest technicality. Owing to the peculiarities of the case, we take your deposition as it were."

While Mr. Carleton was speaking he had opened a long shiny leather pocket book, and, taking from it a folded sheet of legal cap, he spread it on the desk in front of Fairfax.

"Here are a few queries, a few blanks which you will kindly fill out with your name, or with other words and dates as you will readily see."

Fairfax, without in the least changing his position or his countenance, and with but a glance at the document, answered:

"That's all very well, Mr. Carleton. As to this boy who bears my name, I have only to say. I've never seen him; know nothing of him."

"Certainly sir, you knew of his existence?"

"I had a letter from my divorced wife's father telling me of the birth of the child. Needless to say, perhaps, the letter was not acknowledged, and I never had a second."

"Am I to understand sir, that you doubt the paternity of the boy?"

"No, sir, you're to understand no such damned thing. His mother was my wife."

"Then, do you object to the young man inheriting this title and estate?"

"Not in the least; but he must come into possession without the stroke of pen of mine."

"But, my dear sir, why this attitude?"

Fairfax leaned back in his chair and laughed in the lawyer's face.

"Are you feeble-minded, or do you think I am?"

"I am sure, Colonel Fairfax, I see no sign of weakness in your mental faculties, and I think I know myself pretty well." and the lawyer laughed in his turn.

"Yet you ask me to put my name here, and there, and there, saying this unknown youngster is my son by my wife Adelaide Fairfax, *nee* Francis. Married on such a date, son born on such another date. You probably do not know that I married a second time?"

"Yes, sir, I knew of your second marriage. I know too that you have a charming daughter."

"All that, and also what effect the signing of my name here, and there, and there, would have on my daughter's inheritance."

"Well bless my soul sir, if you take that view of it.—"

"What view did you expect me to take of it?"

"Why, my dear sir, don't American fathers provide for all their children?"

"Not always, neither do English fathers."

"But all children born, in wedlock?"

"It depends entirely upon circumstances. The circumstances in this case, in its present stage, are such that I, in a measure control them. When my first wife insisted on an absolute divorce, she held the whip. I was scourged by her, by her father, and

the fortunes of war. I lost my wife and much of my patrimony. I passed several miserable years in tent and field. I was wounded, ill, a prisoner, and, defeated at last. Out of that grievous time, after all these years, comes this boy. He first saw the light where the door was shut in my face because I stood by my principles. He has always lived with my enemies. But, I wish him no harm; I have no wish concerning him. I don't know him, nor care to hear of him. I am entirely indifferent as to what ultimately becomes of him. You may give him this estate, or you may give him to the devil; but, of one thing be sure: I put my name to no instrument like that in his behalf."

"But, Colonel Fairfax, what are we to do?"

"Take the word of the boy's mother. I'll never dispute it."

"That, under the circumstances will not satisfy English law."

"Damn English law;" and Fairfax leaned back in his chair as if the interview was ended.

"I did not mention that young Fairfax and his mother came with me from Washington and—"

"Are they here?"

"No: no they went further, to Lexington, the native city of the lady I believe. There was the death of a relative and some business matters to attend. I await them here, and we go back to Washington,—I had hoped, to England together."

"I see no good reason for a change in your program. While you are waiting for the coming of your client I shall be glad to see you at Fairfax Farms. I shall be delighted to do anything for you but—"

"But this one thing? Ha! Ha! Thank you, Colonel. I shall certainly hope to see you again. Think this matter over. We only want justice."

"You shall have justice; probably not precisely as you see it, but of the sort that Kentucky produces."

The two men shook hands in the most amicable manner. The Englishman went out to gaze on the beauties of the American spring and to ponder on the far-sightedness of the American farmer, banker, and ex-colonel in the Confederate army.

"What a pity!" he soliloquized; "what a thousand pities! Such a fine figure of a man as he is! How well he would grace Treslyn Castle! Even in the House of Lords he would be a man to catch the eye, and bless my soul! the ear too. What a pity that handsome woman couldn't have kept him on the right side of the war. He must have been very much in earnest. He'll never sign these papers. No, he's not the man for that. The estate must go, and the title die with old Leigh. Pity for the boy. He's poor, but he's worthy of his father, quite worthy."

CHAPTER XXVII.

That evening as the two men rode homeward, Fairfax described to his brother-in-law his interview with the English lawyer, finishing with "Of course you knew of my first marriage?"

"Yes, I knew of it. Marcia told me of it, and incidentally Jerome has mentioned it."

"Jerome was in the inner circle: Best man at the wedding, and less than four months later met Adelaide's lawyer to arrange terms of divorce."

"If an annulled marriage could be made a finality, but, there are always troublesome, or at least embarrassing consequences. I've felt afraid, always that you might hear from the Francis family in an unpleasant way."

"Of course, but, I don't mind this. I know the nature of this bother, and I know how to meet it. One never can tell what consequence may grow out of even a trivial action, nor where the consequence may crop out. When it comes to such a tragedy as Adelaide and I enacted, my only surprise is that the after effects have been so slow in coming, and are not more serious now that they are here."

"You're not through yet. It may be serious enough."

"Unless there arise some complications, and I can't see where there's chance for any but the very plainest of sailing. I wish this matter at home could be disposed of as easily. But that's an alien affair."

I can't see that it in any manner belongs to me. I don't understand why these quadroons should be foisted upon me. If I, or any of my name had ever been concerned in mixing the two races, I could accept Burgoyne and all his brood. I don't deny that once, I came devilish near it; but my reformation was complete while the girl was alive and stainless. If she had lived another twelve hours, she would have been free to go where she pleased. If the gods are treasuring that offense against me, seems to me they've grown picayunish, or turned Republican in politics."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed Westlake.

"You see Colonel, the moral is in the intent not in the action."

"Seems to me, for my intent, the loss of a big substantial house with its thousands of dollars worth of furnishings, as well as the two chattels ought to be accepted as fair payment. No, that's far fetched. I see no connection between that time and this;" and he fell to musing of things that were not pleasant. Though he put a brave face on the matter, the visit of Carleton had been like the rough touch of a careless hand on a half healed wound.

His life had been so full of action since the separation from Adelaide it seemed sometimes as if it had been but a dream that he had ever been supremely happy for a little while, then numbly wretched, stolidly miserable, too crushed and hopeless even to know how he was suffering. He suffered with all the strength of his soul and his body, and when men friends watched to see him break, to show some sign of weakness, he guessed their thought, and wished

he could feel like plunging into excesses and carousing time into eternity. But, his smooth fine face never showed a line. When, at their last meeting and after all arguments, all pleadings with Adelaide had not moved her to forego an absolute divorce, and she had said she would resume her maiden name, as he might wish to marry again, he answered her as he had answered Salome: "Certainly I shall marry. A man in my position must marry."

Now it all came back to him, and his thoughts settled down and wound themselves about the one couplet he remembered of a poem he had read some time, somewhere. The hoofs of the horses beat it out as they trotted over the smooth shady road, and he came near answering Westlake's desultory talk with:

"There is mockery in our wooing, there is death
in all our houses;
He liveth best who loveth least, the fool alone
espouses."

Of the women he had loved, of the children that were born to him, could he say there had not been more of bane than blessing? Salome, Adelaide, Marcia. Of his wife his thoughts were kindly, pitying. In her weakness was her strength. He must stand like the great rock by the sea, and let the waves dash against him, knowing the waves were growing weaker, less frequent, and bye and bye would be gone with the tide and reach him no more.

And Zoe. How sweet she was as a baby! As a wee maiden how she had always come flying down the drive to meet him, to shower him with kisses, wilted flowers, candies. Forcing upon him a doll, a

kitten a puppy, anything she had achieved in his absence, and assuring him in baby patois that she had been "awfu' lonesing all day widout oo." As a slim school-girl how sensitive she had been to his praise. As she grew older, as he watched her development into womanhood, beautiful, gracious, how precious she grew day by day. Now to see her being bewitched by this dark-faced foreigner; to be forced to remain passive while she was wooed away from all that was best for her, to feel himself powerless where her whole future was concerned, made him wish she had never been born. But, would he not be justified in exerting his authority against the tacit if not open encouragement of his wife? Dr. Dorne had urged upon him the necessity of avoidance of excitement. "She is so weak," he said, "a hemorrhage would make short work of her." There was nothing to do but to drift. He had reached this conclusion as the horses stopped at the gate. It swung open,, and as they neared the house he saw Sally Burgoyne and Clay Jerome on the veranda. Their horses were held by a boy just beyond the steps. He saw his wife rise from a settee and disappear within the hall as his own team stopped.

He greeted the young people, glanced at their horses, then, "When did you arrive?"

"Just this minute," Clay begun, then seeing Fairfax look again at the horses, he hesitated, and turning to Sally: "I think about ten or fifteen minutes ago."

Sally, less diplomatic said, earnestly, "Oh longer than that, the clock was striking five as we came up the steps—you remember I counted, and the half hour sounded some time ago. I can't imagine what is keeping Zoe and cousin Guido."

"Where did you leave them?" Fairfax asked.

"We started, all together from the falls," Clay said, "but Guido's horse fell lame, and I don't remember just where we lost sight of them."

"Prax," Fairfax called to the man just within the hall, "tell Tim to saddle Flash for me. Be in a hurry."

Westlake attempted to remonstrate as Fairfax walked up and down the pavement at the foot of the steps, but he cut short in a way his brother-in-law had never spoken to him before.

"*Will* that boy be all night?"

Just then Tim came, man and horse both running. Fairfax had swung himself into the saddle when Sally exclaimed:

"Oh Colonel there they are, don't go. Oh I'm so glad!"

"A very lame horse, too," Fairfax snarled. "I thought better of you, Clay."

The young man ran down the steps and stood beside Fairfax: "Upon my word Colonel, the horse limped."

"Another trick," and as the riders approached Fairfax dismounted, his horse was led away but he kept his riding whip in his hand. As the two came up he seized the rein of Castlemere's horse with one hand and raised the whip.

"Oh papa! papa!" was the scream he heard and in the same instant he felt his uplifted arm grasped by two slender, quivering hands, and, spoken close to his face, "Jasper, what do you mean? Are you crazy?"

Slowly his arm descended till the whip trailed on the ground. He dropped his hand from the bridle, and drew that of his wife within his arm.

Castlemere leaped from his horse and, his handsome face glowing and defiant said: "Colonel Fairfax, I ask your pardon for one thing: for speaking to your daughter before asking your permission to do so; but, I have been assured that it is the custom of the country. I do not ask pardon for making for myself an opportunity to speak to her. She went with this little party to-day with her mother's consent. I have done no wrong. I love her. I want her for my wife."

Zoe stood beside him with downcast eyes and flushed cheeks. Fairfax looked at her, not at Castlemere. There was but one conclusion. She had listened, she had given her word. But, her father would not give up the fight. He would take time. This dark-eyed, brigandish, dashing stripling should not rob him thus suddenly. Almost in a whisper he said: "I know nothing of you. I don't believe in you. I would rather give all the remaining years of my life than that this had happened."

Taking Zoe's hand he said, "Go in the house, darling. I'll talk to you bye and bye. After that, sir," turning to Castlemere, "I'll answer you. Now go, and don't let me see you here again until I send for you."

Castlemere bowed low, took a step forward as if he would detain Zoe, but the uplifted hand of her father, still holding the whip, intercepted him. He bowed to Mrs. Fairfax, and the Colonel could have sworn he saw a smile gleam in the dark eyes, to be answered by a most kindly, "Good night, Guido," from the lady. He mounted his horse, and the other two joining him they cantered away together.

In the heat of anger, in the storm of indignation it had been easy for Fairfax to say he would talk to Zoe. Afterwards he found it was one promise he had made that he was inclined to shirk. It seemed a profanation of her maidenly innocence. The longer he thought of it, the more repugnant the matter became.

There was an air about the house that had never been there before, an air of reserve, strange and chilling. No matter how any or all of the family tried to ignore it, it was there.

Zoe avoided her father's presence. She did not speak to him excepting he addressed her directly. He was more than usually kind and tender towards her without the return of a single smile. When he kissed her good-bye at going away of mornings, and in continuance of a habit formed in her childhood said: "Be papa's good girl," she answered, "Yes, papa," in a tone that gave him a heart-ache for the rest of the day.

Very soon it was discovered there was much gossip afloat. Sally Burgoyne, frightened at the behaviour of Colonel Fairfax, indignant at his treatment of her cousin, had reached home in a state bordering on hysteria. She had excitedly told the whole story in the presence of her parents, Countess Castlemere, and a few callers, as well as her brothers and sisters and a half dozen gapeing servants.

Within a day or two, stories were abroad to the effect that there was a most grievous offence to answer for; that Colonel Fairfax had severely beaten the young 'count, and if it had not been for the interference of Mrs. Fairfax there would have been

murder. When curious persons sought out Clay Jerome and asked for the truth of the matter he gave it. He and Castlemere were friends, but, Colonel Fairfax was his ideal. After many inquiries had been made of him as to the exact occurrence at Fairfax Farms, he counselled with his mother. What could be done? What ought to be done to stop the tongues of the gossips?

Mrs. Jerome was shocked to hear of the many unreasonable versions of what had really happened. She decided to speak to Mrs. Fairfax about it at once. It was a shame that a half hour's recklessness in a young man, and a thoughtless girl's acquiescence should create a scandal. She would do as she would thank a friend to do for her in like case.

Much to her surprise she was not allowed to introduce the subject. Mrs. Fairfax took the initiative. She deplored the behaviour of her husband. He had disgraced himself and his family. Her indignation was boundless. It was his hot-headedness, his prejudice. He was breaking her heart through his cruelty to Zoe. There was not the least palliation for his conduct. She was sure he would have killed Guido if she had not held his arm.

Mrs. Jerome smiled in her handkerchief. She had seen her husband try to hold the arm of Jasper Fairfax.

Her hostess continued to pour out her grievances in regard to her husband's opposition to young Castlemere. "No girl in Kentucky, nor in America" she declared, "would allow a suitor like Guido to sue in vain."

Mrs. Jerome smiled again. Her son and the

young count, or whatever he might be, she always added mentally, were the best of friends, as such things go between young men. They were together much of the time. Castlemere came to the house with the greatest freedom. But, when her daughter was rallied by other girls for allowing the fine match, in spite of the great advantage her brother's friendship gave her, to slip through her fingers, her reply, with a dainty shrug, and a throwing out of her hands, was:

"I agree fully with Zoe's father. He has always suspected Colonel Burgoyne of being a thieving, run-away slave. So has Grandpa Cogswell. When I have a husband I don't want a job-lot of assorted colors. I'll take him as the newspapers say Kentuckians take their whiskey;—'straight.'"

Mrs. Jerome tried to comfort Mrs. Fairfax with the assurance that all the talk would blow away; and as the young man had avowed his love openly, and expressed a desire to marry Zoe, probably the wisest thing would be to let them consider themselves engaged, for a year or two, and announce the engagement at once.

Yes, Mrs. Fairfax thought so too, but, no doubt the Colonel would oppose her in this as he had in everything connected with the young people, and Zoe would die of heart-break, and she would never dare to lift her head again amongst her neighbors.

That evening the little private parlor on the second floor witnessed what might have been a domestic storm, had not Fairfax, with all the finesse he was capable of, controlled his wife's fretful mood. He reiterated his promise to talk to Zoe. She was so

young, she did not know her own mind. This feeling she was influenced by was, fancy glamour.

"When will you talk to her?" Mrs. Fairfax asked scornfully.

"Now, I reckon, where is she?"

"In her room, I suppose. She's been suffering with a headache all day. If you had any feeling for her you would have seen that she ate no dinner."

"Of course if she's ill, I'll not disturb her."

Descending the stairs he came out upon the veranda. The night was warm and summer-like. Westlake lounged in a hammock and smoked. The trees were full of summer sounds, the twitter of nesting birds, the flutter of young leaves. But, in this human habitation, divided against itself there was no comfort for the master of all the broad acres. He felt as if laboring under the tortures of a long continued nightmare. Was there no escape from it? Could he not influence Zoe through her affection for him? Ah it was doubtful. This other love, this mating of the sexes, this natural law, this was the strongest tie of all. If it had been any other man of Zoe's acquaintance, any one above the suspicion of this one thing, he thought that, at a suitable age he could have borne, he even would have been pleased to see his dear girl married.

In the morning he would talk to her. He would take her for a long drive; then she could leave him at the bank after they had talked it all over. He would tell her of mistakes he had made. He would tell her, perhaps of her half-brother. He could not bear that she should first hear of this from any one else.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Absorbed in his troubled thoughts Fairfax sauntered down the steps, round the corner of the house, along the walk and into the avenue of beeches. It was a legend in the family that his great-great grandfather and his brother had planted the trees, and then the beech twigs marked a path from one log cabin to the other. They had paid a good round price to have the county road curve so as to leave the trees. They had been cared for by all of the name that came after the first two for more than a hundred years. The Colonel wondered now if these gracefully sweeping branches had ever shadowed any other man with so heavy a heart as his own. Had any other Fairfax ever had so small a hold on happiness as he? What would life and home be without Zoe? If he must give her to this foreigner, she would go away, and he would prefer it. So strong was his dislike of the man, so settled his conviction that he came of ignoble parentage he felt that he could not bear to have Zoe near him not knowing what time might bring to prove that he was right. He grew dizzy and faint, this strong wrestler, this champion swimmer, this soldier who had faced the worst that four years of war could do. He leaned against the trunk of a tree. The perspiration stood in icy beads on his forehead.

But hark! There is a quick, light step on the walk towards the house. It is not Marcia, too quick, too

light for her. Nearer and nearer it came. He peered through the interlacing branches. It is Zoe.

Had his intense thought summoned her? Ah, why had he doubted his influence? He stepped quickly from beneath the sheltering branches and into the open walk as she came near.

"Zoe, darling," he said, putting out his hands to detain her.

She started back as if frightened.

"Oh papa! I—I didn't expect to see you!"

Her manner, her emphasis, sent a chill over him. He took her hands, they were trembling. She submitted limply to be detained. The words he spoke came stiffly, hoarsely from his lips: "Whom did you expect to see? Where were you going?"

She hung her head and made the very faintest movement of resistance.

"Tell me daughter, why were you out alone and hurrying away from the house? Your mother said you were ill."

"I'm better. I think the cool air will do me good."

"I think so too. Come, if you care to walk I'll walk with you."

She drew back. "No, I'll go to the house, please papa."

He held her firmly. "Zoe, look at me. Tell me the truth. Where were you going? and what were you going for?"

"Oh papa, please let me go."

"Where you going to the ruin? Tell me truly."

"Yes, papa," in the faintest whisper.

"Were you expecting to meet Castlemere?"

"Yes, papa," and head and shoulders dropped till her face rested on her father's hands as they held her own.

"Oh my daughter! My baby!" He clasped her closely in his arms. "Do you doubt my love for you that you try to deceive me? Tell me all about it. Have you ever met him there before?"

"No papa, never."

"How was this meeting arranged? Has he been to the house?"

"No papa, he sent a note by Jack Burgoyne."

"Does your mother know of it?"

"Yes, papa, she said I might see Guido at the ruin."

"Ah my poor little girl!"

There came to him a swift vision of Zoe lying still and white in a darkened room, pure, sweet, untainted by deceit, beyond the power of evil. In his heart he wished it was so instead of this.

"Darling, come with me. I'll go with you to the ruin."

"Oh papa!" and a white, convulsed face was lifted, "please don't go, you'll kill Guido."

"Daughter listen. For your sake, because of my love for you, I would spare the life of the most venomous reptile that ever the good God created, if you loved it. If you desired it, if it were for your happiness, it should sting me to death before your eyes. Come."

Not another word was said. Together they went down the long avenue, amongst the swaying shadows of the trees. The night was still, a half moon made a mellow light over the massive walls, draped

with budding vines. The shrubberies had grown into a wilderness, the grass, protected by the untrimmed trees grew lush and long and swept half way over the walks. Somewhere amongst the walls, a whip-poor-will whistled, an owl hooted from the top of a broad chimney. Looking upward, Fairfax plainly saw the night-bird through a rift in the trees, outlined against the sky.

He pressed Zoe's hand. "Where were you to meet Castlemere?"

"In the drawing room by the big stone."

Fairfax thought of it now, he had thought of it a thousand times. Knowing the house as he had known it, bearing in mind so perfectly the geography of this room, he would have sworn that where that stone lay was the exact spot where he and Salome had stood when they were last together, where he left her standing after kissing her hands and assuring her, that, though she was his slave, he would wait her own time to accept him as her lover. Here too Tim insisted was where the woman ghost sat looking into the broken fire-place on the night of Zoe's birthday dance.

It was but a flitting thought, but a ripple in the sea of trouble that engulfed him. It was gone as they entered the door, and saw in the soft light a figure, motionless and dark, standing by the stone.

Their steps over the matted grass of the walks had not been heard, but as they entered Castlemere started forward. He paused, seeing who had come, and his hand sought his bosom.

"Colonel Fairfax, are you armed?" and he flashed a stiletto in the moonlight,

"No;—nor are you."

How it was done Castlemere never could tell. He felt a vise-like grip on his wrist, it was shaken swiftly, dextrously, and the slender weapon flew from his paralyzed fingers, looked a flash of lightning as it sped through a wide window, whizzed through the branches of the trees, then jingled on the debris of a fallen wall.

"Now, barbarian, don't be a fool if you can help it. Tell me in the fewest possible words why you inveigled this girl in to meeting you here. No lies, or I'll wring your neck. Talk of arming myself to meet you!"

"Colonel Fairfax I asked your daughter to meet me here because you forbade me your house."

"This is my house, as well as the other. I think a very small amount of horse sense would have enabled you to understand that my house covers a number of acres of land. I meant all that."

"Truly I did not for a moment misunderstand you. I know the spirit of your command was that I should not see your daughter. But, we are going away, my mother and I. We are going home. From there, somewhere else for the summer months. We go soon. Our passage is about to be engaged. You said you would talk to Zoe and would then answer me. It has been three days, and I had no message. I had to know before final arrangements were made for our going on the City of Paris."

"Why this urgency? I could have sent my answer to Madrid, to Jericho; to Hades."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Guido. "You are pleased to be facetious. How can I leave my love," and he

extended his beautiful hands toward Zoe, "how can I leave her if I may perhaps persuade her to go? Tell the father, sweet, that you only await his consent. The dear beautiful mother has already said yes."

Fairfax was dumfounded. How rapidly had these matters progressed under his very eyes, and he hoping by persuasion to stay them; he thinking it perhaps a boy's amusement, a girl's infatuation. Was this an affair that meant only extravagant flatteries? Would the memory of this soft-tongued black-amoor be blown away by the summer winds after he should cross the sea? Evidently there would be no chance left to decide. And so, Mrs. Fairfax had consented to let the marriage take place at once.

Because of the going to Europe of one of his depositors, Fairfax knew that the City of Paris sailed from New York for Havre on the twenty second. This was the twelfth. Ten days. In that one moment of silence he knew that that was the length of time, or really a day or two less, that he would have his daughter daily in his sight. He turned to her, his voice was low and steady. The strength of endurance had come. He had been shaken with grief, overwhelmed by the thoughts of this great loss when it had seemed possible to avert it. Now it was upon him. He was numb and chilled, but, he was not dead.

"Zoe dear, do you wish to be married before the twenty second and go away then?"

"I've promised, papa, and we hoped you would be kind, and say good-bye to me."

"Ah!" the sigh came near being a groan. "What does your mother say?"

"Mama said you would forgive me after I'd gone away, and that you and she would join us in Norway, or wherever we go for the summer."

"Tell me Zoe, was this marriage to take place without my consent? without my knowledge?"

"Mama thought that would be the best way."

"Pray believe me, Colonel Fairfax, I meant to speak to you. Clay Jerome knows what my intention was. You remember, you said you would send for me."

"Yes, I remember;" and he looked from one to the other of the two, not much more than children. How could he blame them? How could he tell how much Zoe had been influenced by her mother. She had fancied Castlemere from the first, and she had been dazzled by his title, his evidences of wealth and all that it implies. He knew how ambitious she was in things of this kind, how much weight position in society had with her.

As to Castlemere, Fairfax was sure that the boy's mother, for reasons easily guessed, had singled out Zoe for her son's wife. She may have been urged to it by Burgoyne. With these two impulsive children he felt no anger, though as he gazed on Castlemere's dark, handsome face, what he suspected him to be, together with old memories of the spot on which they stood bred in him a feeling of repulsion that was hard to control. But, he put it aside. He said:

"Castlemere, think better of it. You are too young to marry. Go away for a year. You may send Zoe a letter every day. Think of it. She too is young. This fancy you have for each other may wear away. If it does, and you are free from each other what a

fine thing it will be. If you are married and find you've made a mistake what a grief it will be!"

"Oh papa!" and Zoe clung to his arm, "don't send Guido away!"

"There is one thing that Colonel Fairfax forgets;" and Castlemere removed his hat, standing bare-headed, the soft light making an aureole of his lustrous hair. "Our riding party of a few days ago—how much I regret it,—but the tongues are wagging, saying cruel things. If I go away alone, and—you see little Zoe is nearly ill now,—the cruel tongues will lash her to death. I know it is not fancy we feel for each other. Oh believe me Senor, I love your daughter, I cannot go and leave her."

While Castlemere was speaking he had moved nearer. Unconsciously, it seemed, Zoe had put out her hand to be clasped in both of his. Unconsciously she was drawing away from her father.

"It is fate," Fairfax said under his breath, then aloud: "Ah yes, I see. It will be as you had arranged, without my consent if you do not get it. I'm too late. But, listen to me Castlemere. I would rather than this pale trembling girl, have given you all else I possess. I would stand before you a beggar in all save my strength and my possession of her. I would go into my neighbors' fields and work, day by day beside the black men for her support. But now that you take her instead of my less valuable lands and money, if ever you grow weary of her, if for one moment you regret filching from me what makes my life worth living, then in God's name, send her to me, at once. Don't break her heart by neglect.

Don't be cruel to her, not even by a thought. Will you do this?"

"As the great God hears me I will."

He stood with right hand uplifted, palm outward. Then, still clinging with one hand to her father, Zoe lifted her lips to meet her lover's. Her arm, the lace of her sleeve falling away and leaving it bare, clasped his neck and lay against his dark hair.

"Now go, Guido," she said softly as she turned from him to her father.

"Good night Senor, and God keep you."

"Good-night," in a hoarse whisper from Fairfax as he clasped Zoe's hand and led her away.

In silence, as they had come, they passed up the beech avenue. As they neared the house, they saw Mrs. Fairfax pacing up and down between the first of the trees. She heard their steps, peered into the shadows, and recognizing them said:

"Dear me, Jasper, I wondered what had become of you."

"You were not wondering about Zoe, of course?"

"I left her in her room, as I told you and I supposed,—"

He faced her in the light on the first steps of the veranda: "There, don't tell me what you supposed. I know all about it. Take Zoe and finish the work you've been at for the last several months. There is no more need of deception. Prepare her as you will for the sacrifice. Invite any of our friends you wish, to witness our humiliation. Our daughter will be married on the twentieth, here in this house. She shall not steal away from her father like a slave."

"Well, I'm sure I'm glad you've concluded to be reasonable. There's talk enough now."

"Thank yourself for the talk; but let us have no more talk about it here. Make what preparations you please. Don't consult me. I want to hear nothing of it till the last day; and mark this: As far as I am able to judge, you are wholly responsible for Zoe's part in this business. Whatever comes to her in the future, you can thank yourself for it."

"I am more than willing to take the whole responsibility of it," and smiling placidly she led the way into the house.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Mrs. Fairfax told herself that though she had met her own share of disappointments, she had never really known regret until she faced the necessity of making ready, in a week, for her daughter's wedding. This event to which she had looked forward ever since Zoe was born, on which she had meant to exercise all her taste, expend all her pride must now be hurried through like any nobody's wedding. She would have much preferred to have it go on as a semi-elopement. That she had *carte blanche* as to expenses was no comfort, as long as the sun had never been known to stand still but once, and Joshua was the last of his kind.

When she made her plaint to the Countess Castlemere, she was comforted with the assurance that both she and her son were entirely charmed with the sweet bride; they cared nothing for her adornings. A trousseau would be burdensome. Since they were going directly to Paris, the bare idea of making purchases on this side was next to absurd. There was nothing outside of Paris that properly matched Zoe's delicate beauty. In the future every garment she wore should be purchased in this city of artistic modes.

Mrs. Fairfax was comforted. Very soon, next year, perhaps, she would go to Europe, wherever Zoe might be. She felt sure, that then she should see her, matured into a splendid woman of the world;

her bearing, her toilettes those of a queen. She would find her gracing her high position, and shaming her father's stubborn, groundless suspicions. She found no difficulty in obeying her husband's injunction in regard to silence concerning the wedding. She was too busy even with the scant preparations she could make to care to talk of mornings, and of evenings, she lay on her couch, utterly exhausted. To her husband's repeated counsel to be careful, to spare herself, she answered, sometimes impatiently, sometimes not at all. He came and went as usual, keeping himself occupied all day long, keeping out all thought of what was coming save as it remained with him as a sub-consciousness and gave him a heart-ache and an inexpressible weariness. By tacit consent the wedding was not mentioned in his presence at home, and Castlemere timed his daily visits so as to avoid the master of the house.

With Zoe, her father was love and kindness personified. When he went away in the morning she was the last to take leave of him at the carriage step or at the stirrup if he rode Flash. In the evening she was at the gate to meet him, to ride to the house nestled against him or perched behind him, both laughing and gay as if there was not a care in the world.

One evening when her father swung her down from behind him, Tim said: "Miss Zoe, I dun'no how 'tis. Todder day at de stable my gal done got up byhint me on Flash, an' he des got up on he fo' legs an' walked about."

"Flash knows me, don't you Flash?" and she ran

up the steps to get from Sheba the hand full of sugar with which she always rewarded him.

For these few days she was again the petted little child. If she and her father were in the same room, she sat on his knee, or on the arm of his chair. Each seemed trying to obliterate from the memory of the other the shadow of estrangement that had been thrown between them for that grievous little while.

At his office, in the streets of the town, in all the places his neighbors were accustomed to see him, Colonel Fairfax was the same affable, courteous friend, the same pleasant, alert man of business they had always known him.

The presence in Bellaire of so distinguished a personage as the English lawyer, Carleton, was not overlooked. Not many strangers of this type visited the community.

There was no attempt made on his part, nor on that of Colonel Fairfax to keep his mission a secret. They were often seen together. Mr. Carleton was entertained at Fairfax Farms at dinner and over night. He was introduced to the old friends of the family, and his stay in Bellaire was made pleasant in all ways excepting in regard to the matter that brought him there.

Whenever, in the course of a conversation during one of their after-lunch smokes, or on the long drives they had together through the country, or when they were leisurely strolling about town and that one subject was broached, Fairfax would smilingly shake his head: "None of that, Mr. Carleton. I've said all that I have to say. Spare yourself further effort in that direction. I'll not put my name to this paper.

I'll not sign away one half of my birthright for less than Esau got for his. When your client comes, bundle him off to England and make a lord of him. I've not the least doubt but it will be much more than his mother's son deserves."

When Mr. Carleton talked of his business in Bellaire with the friends of Colonel Fairfax, he found no one who sympathized with the divorced wife. All who knew of that marriage and the cause of its annulment agreed fully with the Colonel. The remnants of the fires of factional hatred blazed out on several occasions, and Adelaide Francis and her father were denounced most bitterly.

Mr. Carleton found that there were many American matters that he but faintly understood. One was, the real cause of the war. He had also to wonder over a most tantalizing problem: Would the North and the South ever be entirely united?

Amongst the acquaintances the Englishman made in Bellaire, none were kindlier, or more hospitable than Senator Cogswell. As lawyers the two found themselves companionable. As an old man, Cogswell gave the Englishman much interesting local history. As a lifelong friend of the Fairfax family he entertained his new acquaintance for hours with history, tradition and readings of character.

On an evening when the Cogswells gave a little family dinner with Mr. Carleton as the guest of honor and the one stranger, he found it necessary to explain that he was not remaining in Bellaire with any hope of obtaining the signature of Colonel Fairfax necessary to make his unacknowledged son a man of wealth and title. He was simply awaiting the move-

ments of the young man and his mother. They were in the state, and for himself, he found it pleasanter waiting here than in Washington. He had apprised Mrs. Fairfax and her son of the hopelessness of his errand with the colonel. He had asked them if it might not be worth their while to stop here, and talk the matter over with him, and perhaps with Colonel Fairfax himself.

Then Mrs. Cogswell declared it would be shameful, if Adelaide came to Bellaire, to have her stay at a hotel and be stared at. She must come to us, must'nt she dear?" appealing to her husband.

"Certainly dear, certainly," he answered.

They had known Adelaide since childhood. She had gone to school with their own girls. She had visited in Bellaire, and they had frequently met her at summer and winter resorts. After several years of separation, Mrs. Cogswell had unexpectedly met Adelaide one day on the street in Washington and the broken friendship was patched together. Now, in return for a few fragrant cups of tea served by the young to the old woman, it was ordained that there should be a few days of rest, and petting, and reviewing of old happy times.

To all of this Senator Cogswell readily agreed. It had been a hard struggle with him to go to see his old friend Francis, but, once there, he was softened by the signs of poverty that surrounded the family. He thought that a man who would relinquish all that Archie Francis had for the sake of principle must have been very much in earnest. He tried to see political matters from the view point of these impoverished Unionists. Then Adelaide;—so beauti-

ful, so sweet, so womanly; ministering so unselfishly to her father and her son. Sometimes Senator Cogswell would say to his wife, "I don't see how Jasper could choose as he did!"

To which Mrs. Cogswell would reply, "Well, dear, it's just as hard for me to comprehend Adelaide's action. I'm sure I never could have deserted you."

"No indeed! and I'm not handsome like Jasper; ha! ha!"

So, through all these years, as Cogswell still retained his seat in Congress, he was a frequent visitor at the plain little home of Archibald Francis. The most interesting member of the little family was the boy, Jasper. The old Senator watching him through all this time continually deplored the fact of his separation from his father. Now when the thing most talked of was the trouble brewing at Fairfax Farms, he shook his head, saying to his wife, "Ah it's a thousand pities! That boy at Washington will never make such a blunder. Zoe's a dear, sweet girl, but, she's like her mother; she's no Fairfax."

Next in importance to the coming wedding of Zoe Fairfax was the revival of the fact of her father's first marriage and its consequences. Everybody knew that the father and son had never met but that the English lawyer was going to arrange a meeting to try to effect a compromise in the matter of the inheritance across the water. Everybody knew more of these things, and felt greater anxiety about them than did the family directly concerned. For once Mrs. Fairfax was too busy to wonder and fret about "the other Mrs. Fairfax." Her husband had told her of the first call of the lawyer and what he had deter-

mined upon. She said to her brother, "there was no need of worrying, Jasper was too stubborn to change his mind."

To Colonel Fairfax all the buzzing of tongues was nothing, less than nothing. His first wife and her son might come and go when and where they pleased. It mattered not to him. It was this other, this wife who was dying before his eyes, this child who was making such an irreparable mistake, these troubled him. For these he felt himself numb and half dead, and yet so painfully alive and conscious. If not speaking to some one, it seemed to him there were only two facts in the world: The day of the month, the number of days to elapse before Zoe's wedding. At times he felt that he must cry out against the swift rising and setting of the sun. Then he wished he might fall asleep and so remain till it was all over. He often smiled to think he had ever before grieved. This only was sorrow.

Two days before that appointed for the marriage ceremony, Colonel Burgoyne called upon Westlake at his office, and after much wandering talk, finally made it understood that Count Castlemere and his mother expected something in the way of marriage settlements; at least an understanding as to the sum per annum that the future countess would have from her father, or in spot cash to take away with her.

Westlake threw up his hands and backed away laughing:

"You know how the colonel feels about the marriage. Do as you think best about speaking to him."

"But you manage much of his business for him.

His business man is the proper person to arrange the whole affair."

"Yes, he advises with me on business matters, but, I'm entirely at his disposal. I wouldn't take the liberty of crossing a T without his full consent. I'll speak to him in your presence, but I'm as sure of the answer as I am that I'm alive."

Together they went to the bank, to the private office of the president. Again Colonel Burgoyne began meandering through a long preface.

Westlake watched his brother-in-law arranging and re-arranging, with quick nervous movements, the desk furnishings. He knew in a minute there would be a storm. With his usual off-hand manner, he cut in, with "Come at it at once, Colonel, or allow me to say to brother Fairfax that you are envoy for Count Castlemere to negotiate marriage settlements."

"Ah! That is easily disposed of. I'm not purchasing Count Castlemere. I don't want him. I know what my daughter's necessities are, and will probably supply them. As to any formal marriage settlements," he compressed his lips and set his jaws squarely, "I make nothing of the kind."

"Of course you'll do as you please; but, it being the custom of the country where the Count and your daughter expect to live, you know—"

"I know I don't care a damn for the customs of any country but my own in an affair like this. If I had adhered to Kentucky customs I'd have thrashed that gypsy beggar within an inch of his life."

"Colonel, Colonel!" Westlake remonstrated.

"I know what I'm saying, and to whom I'm saying it."

Burgoyne rose to go. "You cannot imagine, Colonel Fairfax how much it grieves me that our friendship should receive this blow; that this tie that should draw our families nearer to each other seems likely to cause coldness, if not enmity."

"Let us talk no more about it. I've forbidden my wife and daughter to mention it to me. I only wish to God that Castlemere would not take the girl without a stated dower."

"Ah you are not treating the boy justly. He would gladly marry your daughter were she disinherited and a beggar in the streets."

"Possibly, but I don't believe it. But granting you are right; I like him none the better. It would not cancel, in the least my objection to him as a husband for my daughter."

CHAPTER XXX.

The day before the wedding, and a gentle rain was falling, a soft, lazy, irresolute rain; the sort of rain that tempts children to stay out of doors, and that hurries nobody.

Colonel Fairfax sat in his office, his desk open, books, pens, pencils, all the paraphernalia of business scattered about, partly from force of habit, partly to hide from any who might come, the suffering that was rending him.

As in a dream he was groping for a reason for his pain. His life had been no intricate labyrinth. It had been plain and common. There were no tangled threads. Each event that met him he had seen rise naturally, and as naturally he could trace it to its close. If a grievance had come to him from his first wife, or from her family or her friends he would have recognized it as the legitimate sequence of his own actions;—a something that he, having planted, must also reap and garner. But, up to now, all that had come from that wrack to him had been the corroding memory of the quarrel and the parting, and the unreasonable jealousy of his second wife during the first years of their life together. This last had been exceedingly unpleasant. It had grown and flourished until in its very exuberance it had strangled itself.

The desert spot left by the killing of this poisonous growth he did not pretend to deny; he passed it

in silence, only saying, ' Better that than the Upas tree.'

Any other consequences from that time had yet to develop. True, here was this Englishman dogging him, but, that was nothing. He was master of the situation. He was glad this question had arisen in his own life time. He was glad too that it was a foreign property in jeopardy; for in spite of his belief in his indifference he was rather pleased than otherwise that Adelaide's son could not attain to wealth and station excepting by and through his sanction. If it had been an American property, his neutrality in the business would have made no difference for or against it. The high respectability of the mother of the heir would have been guaranty.

So, this morning he sat wondering, still trying to find, if not the thread that should lead him out of this maze, at least the way by which he had come into it. The past lay like an open plain in his memory. Here and there was a hillock marked by a white stone, lettered with the names of kindred, friend, comrade, nothing more. Even the one great sin that for a time lay upon his conscience like an unquenchable fire; he felt had been expiated; that it was in revenge Salome had perished, without a thought of sacrificing herself. She had unwittingly set her own death-trap.

This present chapter of his book of life seemed to be thrown in at random. It was parenthetic, accidental. It had no connection with any other part of the story. Perhaps, even yet, something would happen to prevent it being bound up for him forever.

What could happen? He was not yet at the point where he could pray for death or disaster for his child. but, some accident might meet—He recalled the vision of his young kinsman across the sea lying stone dead in his own fields. Hearts of father and mother had broken for him. Castlemere was a fine horseman; but, there was a strip of treacherous clay where the road overhung the river between the Burgoyne place and Bellaire. If the half-broken colt that the young man habitually rode should take it into his head to be restive, unmanagable at that spot, only one thing could happen. For the moment, the tortured father wished it most intensely. He spoke his thought:

“Ah Cain, your blood stirs within me; but, if it is done, my thought, not my hand, will do it. The moral is in the wish, the intent; and my deeds upon my head!”

The door opened softly. A clerk came in, and with an inquisitive stare laid a card on the desk. Fairfax picked it up, and, in his abstraction wondered, for an instant if it was a mistake, and whose card should have come instead. He read his own name:

Jasper Fairfax,
Washington, D. C.

He looked at it stolidly, saying mentally that he had never had a card printed with that address. The clerk waited, and when Fairfax laid the card down and looked at him without seeing him, he took it for a sign to go. As he left the room, Fairfax only

half conscious that his thoughts had been interrupted, turned again to the card. Where had it come from?

Then a clear low voice was saying: "Good morning Colonel Fairfax."

He looked up, then rose from his chair. Was it the ghost of his youth come to show him the point where started the little rill that led to this sea of trouble?

The eyes that were on a level with his were his own. The face, boyish and beautiful had looked up at him from the river on many a summer day; had laughed back at him from his mirror and from maidens' eyes.

He passed his hand across his forehead. He meant to speak, but his misty thought was: "Why delude myself further? I'm dreaming, or this nightmare is becoming too much for me."

Then the clear voice was heard again:

"If you are busy I'll go away and call later, or,—the day after to-morrow; any time you may appoint;"

So the ghost would insist on an answer.

"No," Fairfax said, gazing steadily into the gray eyes, "I've nothing particular in hand. State your business."

"Perhaps you're not well?" as the Colonel languidly indicated a chair and as languidly dropped into his own.

"Hem! it's a compassionate ghost, but, not more so, I reckon than I used to be;" this mentally. Aloud he said: "Yes, I'm quite well, thank you. What can I do for you?"

A frank, pleasant smile kindled in the eyes of the young man, lighting up his whole face. Fairfax

noticed the dampness on his dark hair, and how it lay in waves over his head and in rings about his forehead and neck.

"You *can* do me a great service, but, will you? You have refused to do it at Mr. Carleton's solicitation. I learn that he's out of town for the day. There was a misunderstanding or delayed letters. He was not here to introduce me. Mr. Cogswell advised me to introduce myself. I fancy I'm not an entire stranger to you."

"Your fancy misleads you. This is the first time I ever saw you."

"Yes, that's true, but, you knew of me, and in the nature of the case, you must naturally have expected to see me sometime. In fact I'll wager you've wondered many times why I didn't call upon you."

Fairfax held his breath. The smile still lingered about the finely cut mouth, there was a daring gleam in the long gray eyes of this bold boy. The Colonel felt his pulses quickening as he gazed in fascination at his visitor. The consciousness that here was a part of himself; that this boy, speaking to him in "the sublime audacity of youth" might nonchalantly raise his hand, and, instead of asking a favor say:

"You sir, are responsible for my being. You have shirked the duties of your relationship a long time. You have kept me out of my own. Now, sir, I demand restitution;" this kept him silent.

He had often wondered if he would ever meet this unknown son. He had told himself that if he did, it would be the same as meeting any other human creature. Perhaps it might have been so if the resemblance had not been so marked. Whenever he opened

his lips to speak he had an absurd sensation as of turning himself out of doors.

Leisurely he said: "And do you suppose your own rhetoric will be more potent than Mr. Carleton's trained faculties? Has he told you my reasons for refusing to put my name to the instrument that will pave the way for you to this English title and estate?"

"Yes, he told me. I had no reason to suppose that I could induce you to do, only what is right in the premises, excepting by binding myself by any form of bond you may desire to claim no share in your own possessions."

I do not ask anything of the kind. I want no commerce with you in any way. When your mother insisted on absolute divorce, I, through my lawyers, Cogswell and Jerome, offered her anything she might ask. There was no mention of an expected child; so no provision made for one. After all these years, neither you nor your mother have any least claim upon me."

"You have not been misrepresented to me by any persons concerned in the separation of yourself from my mother. They are all truthful people. My mother and I do not wish to have any claim upon you. Probably by the terms of the divorce she has none; but, I have. In that transaction I had no vote; now I'm old enough for the ballot, and I'm going to say my word on everything that comes my way. I also have a claim upon this estate across the water. For my mother's sake, to make her life pleasant, I want it. For myself, I can make my way as well as any boy that ever was born. For my mother, I do not

hesitate to say that I want money and plenty of it; and I'm ready to make a big fight for it."

"Yes, that's right. I've no doubt you're a good son; but you may as well consider your fight with me as quite over. You can move your forces whenever you like."

"Colonel Fairfax, looking at you, I can't understand why you do this. You have the advantage, but, a man with your head and face oughtn't to do a mean thing."

The fearless, positive tone was re-inforced by the steady gaze of the clear eyes.

"So, you're a physiognomist?"

"Oh no, but," there was a short laugh; "I can see that I resemble you, very much, and I couldn't imagine myself doing a thing of this sort."

"No? At your age, and with your lack of experience it is useless to ask you to look at the matter from my point of view."

"Yes, I suppose that makes some difference." A pause, then, "Colonel Fairfax, if I could be assured that it was the loss of my mother that warped you, I could forgive you."

Fairfax started visibly, lifted his head and stared at the young man as if he had struck him.

"Don't tax your benevolence. I have given good and sufficient reasons for my attitude; reasons that were enough for Carleton, and must suffice for you."

Still he did not go, but sat studying his father as if he would read him through and through. After a few moments of silence, he spoke, laughing as he did so:

"I wonder if I ever could do a thing like this.

Would you mind telling me what it was that sent you to the devil?"

If Colonel Fairfax had been put upon his oath he would have stated that he was never more surprised in his life. He laughed in spite of himself. Such a new sensation as he was experiencing! He hardly knew how to class it. This boy was daring to the verge of insult, and yet, each time he spoke his father felt a species of pride in his manner of defying him. Not one other person in the world had ever dared to speak to him in this manner, to even look at him as did this slender copy of himself.

"Well sir, you certainly do not mean to be misunderstood. I begin to see myself in a new light; and I confess I'm not flattered."

"It frequently happens that truth is not flattering. I don't need to wait for gray hair and spectacles to know that. You say that I do not mean to be misunderstood. I assure you that I do not. I have one thing more to say before going. You can consider it at your leisure until I see you again, not to-morrow of course," and he continued in a softer tone as he saw how his host shrank as if in pain, "but sometime soon. You can see for yourself the line of events that have led up to this day, and to this first meeting between us. The same cause that separated you from my mother, rendered you ineligible as heir to this English fortune. By these causes, I, though entirely passive and blameless, am left a pauper, in a degree when, by natural right I should be at least comfortably provided for. I don't ask now, though I might and get it, a share of Fairfax Farms, or anything else that you possess. I tell you honestly that

I don't want it. I will put my name in a thousand places saying the same thing if you will simply put your name where it will be of service to me in the other matter."

Colonel Fairfax smiled indulgently.

"And, if I do not do this, my young dictator?"

The young man arose and swung his hands behind him. His father watched every motion. "How well he carries himself," was his mental comment. His manner was calm, his voice was steady, there was a half smile in his eyes. He stood looking at his father as he had looked when he first came in.

"Ask yourself, sir what you would do;—what any man who respects himself would do. Right is on my side of the question. I would like to be friendly with you. There is no reason why we should not be friends. If you will it otherwise, so be it; I'll try to be as good an enemy as you ever had in all your days. I am as good a Fairfax as you are, and there was never a beggar amongst us. I will have my own to the ultimate copper."

Colonel Fairfax was standing too. He wondered at the complacent glow that swept over him as the boy declared himself a Fairfax. As his visitor moved towards the door, he said:

"You don't know, I'm sure, how these heroics become you. Really, if you go to extremes I would advise you to plead the cause for yourself."

"The cause will require no special, at least no expert pleading. If it should, I know where to find it. The best legal talent in Washington is at my service, for—my mother's sake."

A wave of color swept over the face of Colonel

Fairfax. He was as surprised at the anger he felt at the thought of some other man loving his former wife as his son was to see the evidence of that jealousy. The young man smiled; he came near laughing outright, and Colonel Fairfax knew that he had betrayed himself.

When he was alone he walked the floor with quick steps. He was lost in thought, but, his musings were pleasant. "He's a fine fellow!" so he summed up mentally. "As handsome a boy as—I ever saw, and, I wonder if he'd be afraid to meet the devil." He laughed silently. "How I should like to see him and his mother together! I can't imagine Adelaide as mother of the strapping fellow. They must have been beautiful together when he was a little fellow. And oh to have seen him as a baby! To have seen her ministering to him in the sweetest, holiest office of motherhood!"

He sat down by the open window. It still rained, but the sun was shining, and his face lightened with the sky. "I was mistaken," he said softly, "Adelaide was in earnest. She did care for me. She sacrificed as much, probably more for her principles than I did for mine. Galatea never returned to her pedestal, was never again frozen to marble. She remained a woman. Her thoughts, through lonely, patient hours, stamped her son with the likeness of his father. But, why did she not tell me? That is unforgivable. Such a difference it would have made if I had known."

That evening Colonel Fairfax drew Zoe out on the veranda, and walking back and forth around the three sides of the house, he told her of her half-brother.

She had heard of it, she said a few days before, and had then asked her mother about it. She had evaded answering, and upon being pressed, impatiently told Zoe, that the subject was very unpleasant; that she must ask Sheba, or Uncle Westlake, or her father. She had gone to Sheba. She knew of the marriage, but nothing of the boy. So now she had the whole story and she saw her father in a new sad light. When it was all finished she asked: "Papa how does he look?"

"Very much like myself; as tall, with the same eyes and hair, and I fancy much of my manner."

"Oh papa, how I'd like to see him! and how I wish we could have had him living with us here."

"Yes," and he thought what a difference it might have made with this flower-like girl if she had had such a sturdy clear sighted brother as a constant companion. Then he took up his burden again to lay it down, when?

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a great and pleasant sensation in Bellaire. This tall, lithe young Fairfax walked the streets an exact copy of his father twenty-five years ago. He was at once recognized by men and women of his father's age and older, and the hospitable home of Senator Cogswell was over-flowing with callers.

The feeling against Adelaide Francis had been bitter and unrelenting, but, what had this handsome, gracious boy to do with his mother's conduct? The charm of youth and his father's face and manner were all potent. The mother of a son like that could be forgiven much. Gray heads nodded wisely. Had not this unknown young Fairfax made his debut in the nick of time? While the father was vexed and grieved over the wilfulness of the daughter would not the son stand the better chance of recognition?

So thought ex-consul Burgoyne, and so he said to Countess Castlemere on the evening of the day when all Bellaire knew that young Jasper Fairfax had called upon his father, and had left his private office looking satisfied, after a long conference.

John Burgoyne and his cousin, like Colonel Fairfax and his daughter, walked the veranda. They talked long and earnestly, Burgoyne at last half angrily.

"I tell you, it will ruin everything. Why can't you

be satisfied? After the wedding is over, let the young folks go as arranged, and you keep silence and follow them."

"I wouldn't forego the satisfaction I'll have in letting Jasper Fairfax know who I am, not for twice the price of the farms."

"Well you'll probably forfeit half that. The girl will either be disinherited or persuaded to cut away from Guido at once."

"Neither one will happen. The girl is bewitched. She'll follow Guido to the end of the world. As for being disinherited, her father only lives for her—"

"But now this boy has come to the front;—"

"I know Jasper Fairfax. He worshiped Adelaide Francis, long before he was free to marry her. He is as unrelenting as a cobra robbed of its mate. Adelaide's son will never get a sou from his father. My doll-baby daughter-in-law will have it all, now remember that."

"Well, have your way, but mind what I tell you; to-morrow by this time your Castles in Spain built from the proceeds of Fairfax Farms, will be tumbled about your ears."

When old friends came seeking Adelaide Fairfax she received them graciously, but, as she would be in Bellaire for so short a time, and, under such peculiar circumstances, she begged them to allow her to remain in seclusion.

When Jasper returned from his interview with his father, he at once sought his mother, and told her of his failure to win his point. Then, remembering the flush that dyed the colonel's face, he said:

"But, I'll win yet. You'll see me Lord Treslyn very soon, my lady mother."

"I hope so, dear, but Colonel Fairfax is very firm. You may know how firm by this situation, and by the whole story of your life."

'I know it, but, I'm firm too. I told him I found myself quite as good a Fairfax as himself. If I'm not why was his pattern wasted on me?"

His mother laughed; "Yes, you are as like him as one person can be like another."

She was singularly beautiful. Tall, slender, even girlishly slim, yet with a rounded figure every movement of which was graceful and charming. Her heavy golden chestnut hair showed here and there a thread of silver, but her deep pansy eye were full and dewy, and her complexion was like transparent ivory with a rose glow beneath. Her's was the regal beauty that swayed men's hearts yet held them in check. Men worshiped her standing afar, and, while worshipping her, keeping the memory of her face shrined in their hearts as something sacredly precious, they married plainer, commoner women. She was a woman before whom the average man wished he could forget or blot out all his sins. He felt instinctively that her's was a great soul dwelling apart in its own pure atmosphere.

Vaguely her son had the same feeling as, sitting by her now, talking to her of his father, occasionally breaking out mirthfull as he told how he had been cut short on all points, but not abashed. When he had told all he added:

"But mama, he's a magnificent man. It's no wonder that Clay Jerome raves about him."

The mother smiled, shaking her head, repeating:

"You are as like he was at your age, as it is possible for one person to be like another. Don't be vain."

"Yes, I'm not a chip from the old block, I'm another block of the same tree. No wonder Grand-dad says so sorrowfully: 'You're all Fairfax; every inch of you.' Ha! Ha!"

"Poor father! he's too old to outgrow the grief and disappointment he felt that Colonel Fairfax should wear the gray;—"

"While Grand-dad wore his black broad-cloth till it was shabby and shiney, and vaped about loyalty and the Union, and did nothing else. I must confess, mama, now, since seeing the colonel, knowing only so much of him as I've been told, and that mostly from Grand-dad's point of vision and opinion, and what I found out to-day by bearding him in his den, I don't see how you could have decided against him."

"Oh my son! Is principle nothing?"

"Principle is the heart of everything good, but, politics is a humbug. It was simply a difference of opinion. Colonel Fairfax and plenty of other clear-headed men believed themselves right, just as much as ever Washington did."

"But dear, they were wrong. Can't you see how wrong they were?"

"The wrong was not of their making; and I tell you it must have been deucedly tough to be thrashed for all the sins of all their fore-fathers and have their pockets picked besides."

"Yes, but wrong must be atoned for some time,

It may seem to be forgotten, but it isn't. Each sin bears its own punishment within itself."

"Yes, you've shown me that in so many instances I haven't the least speck of comfort in the most juvenile kind of a lark. I always think, now mama will look right through me and read it all, as soon as I get home. Then look out for Nemesis."

How happily her laugh rang out as she leaned over and kissed the tanned cheek.

"But," he continued, "I tell you mama, you were a deal more of a patriot and a philosopher than you were a woman, or you'd have followed Colonel Fairfax through Hades and all."

"Jasper!" and the slender hands were lifted in expostulation; but the boy laughed in her face, caught the hands and held them firmly, saying, while a reckless light danced in his eyes:

"One of these days when you have a daughter-in-law, she'll stand by Fairfax, right or wrong. I'll have no star-spangled goddess of Liberty for my—Lady Treslyn."

"Take care," and she held one of his brown hands in both her own, "Remember whom you are dealing with for permission to grasp this title, even for yourself. Your father is very stubborn."

"So is my father's son very stubborn; and, if your son's father doesn't listen to reason he'll find himself thrashed out, slick and clean. I'll do the job much more thoroughly than the Federal troops did it."

"Dear, I wouldn't for the world go into litigation."

"No, you'd go into the poor-house for principle. We Fairfaxs don't do that way. I'll fight for my

English millions as hard as—Dad fought for his darkies.”

“But it would be unbearable to go into court and have the whole story talked about, and even published.”

“It’ll never reach that point. I don’t believe Colonel Fairfax would like litigation any better than you would. He’ll compromise rather than allow me to drag the whole business into court, especially when he knows of the legal talent that I can muster;” and Jasper looked at his mother quizzically. “I gave him a small hint that way.”

“And then what?” and Mrs. Fairfax laughed softly.

Jasper smiled, remembering: “I think it moved him slightly. He said nothing, did nothing that could be told, but, I had a flitting glimpse of the true inwardness of my gentleman father’s soul. It’s all right, and I like him immensely! I must go and brush up for dinner. Oh, I say, mama, isn’t Fanny Jerome a darling? Don’t you think she begins to look like Lady Treslyn?”

“Oh you silly boy! Go brush your hair and put on a clean collar!” and she playfully put him out of the room.

Down the hall she heard him singing at his toilet snatches of a popular song as if he only remembered a line here and there. It was a song of blighted affections with the refrain:

“I knew that he had not forgotten
By the flush that swept over his face.”

There was a bar or two in a strong soprano, then the voice soared away in a tenor as clear as a bugle call; then a musical whistle carried the air with many trills and quavers over a verse, when the voice softly repeated:

“ I knew that he had not forgotten
By the flush that swept over his face.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Happy is de bride dat de sun shines on, Mas' Jasp. See de rain's all done gone f'om de bride's day."

Sheba was hobbling through the halls very early that morning. She was well nigh helpless with rheumatism and, though long ago she had been forced to delegate her powers, she was still the reigning housekeeper. Now that the great event of the wedding of the sole daughter of the house was on hand she was up and stirring to see that everything was in order. She met her master near the door of her own room, and, knowing that he was troubled almost beyond endurance, she would offer one little crumb of comfort. She could not let him pass without the kindly hopeful word.

He sighed and his sigh was painful. His bosom was sore with the heaviness within.

"Oh, I hope, Mammy, that our little girl will be happy, but, I'm afraid, I'm sorely afraid."

"Well Mas' Jasp, yo done said all yo' kin say Yo des got to leab it wid de good Lawd. He neba makes no mistakes like weuns does. Now honey, hyah comes dat gal wid my coffee. Come in an' set wid me; an' yo' Jen, g'long back tote a cup hyah fo' Mas' aspa

His old nurse could have wept to see the pallid pinched look in her master's face, the white that had come into his hair within the last few weeks. She

did not know that all night long he had wandered up and down the place. She did not know that he had stolen into his daughter's sleeping room, and there gazing down upon her fair face had felt himself possessed of the soul of Virginius. She could not have realized how, in his agony he was not horrified at the thought, nor that he was only deterred by the fear that his hand might not be sure, that the dear eyes might open, and, misunderstanding the kindness of his action should haunt him forever with their reproach.

All night long he had striven for the clue to this thing that had come upon him. Why had he been rendered powerless before this foreign stripling? When he blamed Guido's mother for wielding her insinuating influence and fascinating Zoe, then he blamed himself also for not knowing her better, for not seeing more of her; for not more openly measuring her strength with his own. And yet, had not the last five months, ever since the Castlemere's came, been filled with a continuous series of efforts against them? The failing health of his wife had been the great deterrent. Her weakness held all his strength, all his will, all his conjugal and paternal authority at bay.

One thing he might have done to some purpose, but, when this one thing had seemed to evade him, he was well satisfied to let it alone: That was, to have forced the Countess Castlemere to accept his society. She had been within his own doors, many times, but with the exception of two or three of these times, always in his absence. When he knew that on social occasions she had avoided him, he experienced a sensation of relief. Now he thought that possibly, after the first meeting he had not been cordial, and a

woman accustomed as she was to unbounded adulation could not brook that one man she met should fail in homage. Perhaps her reserve, took color from his own, and through pique ran into extremest avoidance.

Zoe's mind had for years been filled with stories of Guido and his mother. Their coming, their striking appearance, their apparent wealth, their manners, and more than all their adroit flatteries had been like a fulfillment of all her girlish dreams. There was nothing in any of the romances she had ever read more charming than this beautiful boy and his worship of herself. He was the fairy prince who would crown her queen of his heart, so, what was all the world beside?

Now, very soon, Colonel Fairfax thought, it would all be over. He could see nothing beyond this day, beyond the question, "Who gives this woman to this man?"

Still, when thought and life grew most grievous, with a strange insistence, breaking into his heavy wretchedness and scattering the clouds for an instant, ever since the close of that interview of the day before, there came the fine, frank face of the boy who bore his own name. In spite of himself when this young face broke upon his thoughts his burden was lifted. When his heart was heaviest, when he felt that he must raise his voice and shout his sorrow to the world, then close to his own came the face with full clear gray eyes drowned in laughing light; a nonchalant smile curved the handsome mouth, and a fearless, daring speech mocked at grief and pain.

Until this morning Colonel Fairfax had hoped for

a respite. Something would intervene to save his child. But, the hurried preparations were all complete, the house was full of guests. Doctor Ballantyne, bent and old had come to unite the child whose grandfather had been his friend to,—he knew not whom.

Fairfax had said to him, "Make the ceremony as short as may be. I cannot bear much more."

The old man, knowing well the strong nature of his friend, knowing the reason of his opposition to this marriage, knowing all that had been brought to bear to accomplish it, felt that Jasper Fairfax was suffering with all the strength of mind, soul and body, so must be nigh unto death.

And now, as in a dream, with a heavy, whirring sound in his brain, with feet of lead and hands of ice, he was leading a white-robed clinging figure down the stairs, across the hall, into the long drawing room where the dark bridegroom awaited her. Blindly he responded to the one question, placing the hand of his child in that of the priest. In that act he felt that he relinquished his daughter, but, he cast down his eyes. He would not look upon the transfer of that helpless little hand from the protection of the church to that of the bridegroom.

The gruesome thought came that this was more than he might have felt had he stood beside the pit and listened to the earth being shoveled in to hide the dear one lying there. That, beside this would have been a tender grief, a sacred memory.

He heard the remainder of the ceremony as if it came from far away. It was nearly over. All was black before him. Would he faint? Close to his

own came that boyish face again. Again that fearless scrutiny, that measuring of his soul as it showed itself, with what it should have been. Again that laughing impertinence; "I wonder what ever happened to you that sent you to the devil."

Ah that was the question that puzzled him as well as the boy. If he could only ravel this web that entangled him, if he could only discover the beginning of this most hateful day, he thought he could bear it in better spirit.

There was but little time to spare after the ceremony was over. The master of the house had so willed it. He would bear what was forced upon him, what was essential to fill the demands of the law and the church, but nothing more. He would tolerate no avoidable festivity.

When the bride, attired for her going away clung to her father at the head of the stairs and besought him to go down with her, to put her in the carriage, to hold her hand in his till the very last, he whispered "No, darling: it is the last here and now. Good-bye daughter. Whatever happens, don't forget that I love you more than anything else in the world. If you are happy, assure me of it. If you are disappointed, if, for any reason under the sun you want to come back to me, tell me so. You'll always keep a place in your heart for me, darling?"

"Oh yes, papa!"

He kissed her hair, her eyes, her hands, he held her close and stared at her dumbly, and when Fanny Jerome, sobbing pitiously, and vowing in her heart she'd never leave her own father, never, said, "Oh

Colonel, she must go or they'll miss the train," he released her.

He remained shut within his own sleeping room until the roll of wheels on the drive had ceased and the house was quiet save for the usual familiar sounds. Then, rousing himself, he thought he would call Prax, order Flash to be brought round, and he would gallop away to some nook by the river and pass the remainder of the day in solitude. But, for some unaccountable reason, there came no answer to the repeated ringing of the bell. Possibly the wire was disabled. There was nothing to be done but to go down. Not a servant was to be seen in the halls, but when he reached the drawing-room floor, there, in a cozy group sat the Burgoynes, husband and wife, Countess Castlemere and Mrs. Fairfax.

The Burgoyne carriage stood where it had been placed on their arrival. The coming in of the master of the house was a disturbing influence to the group. Each member of it moved uneasily as people do when they suspect they are intruding.

Fairfax allowed no awkward silence. He introduced his own affairs by asking his wife if she had the least idea where Prax had bestowed himself, and what ailed that one particular bell.

She knew nothing of Prax but she knew that the bell had been crippled a day or two ago, and there had been no time to have it repaired.

Then Mrs. Burgoyne said they must go, and the party arose. Countess Castlemere said:

"Cousin John, as I go away to-morrow so as to join the children on the steamer next day, this will be my last opportunity of seeing, once more, that de-

lightful ruin at the other end of the beeches. I'll walk down, and you can pick me up as you come that way."

"But why not ride down, and go in at the front gate, and indulge your fancy?"

"The view is not so good that way. You come upon it too suddenly. I must have my way. You take your own time for driving down."

Mrs. Fairfax made a feint of saying she too would walk to the ruin, but, she sighed and leaned on the back of a chair looking unutterably fragile and weary. She turned toward her husband. This was such a little thing, and yet she would not ask him to do it.

His heart smote him. He had not been kind to her lately. Her eyes were heavy, perhaps with weariness, perhaps with pain, perhaps with secret tears.

He could do no less than offer to walk with the Countess to this interesting spot on his own premises. He thought she was already assuming airs of ownership and trying to make them unobtrusive. She said how delighted she would be, and yet, she did not wish to be troublesome in the gratification of a whim.

Colonel Fairfax coldly, and ceremoniously assured her that it would be a pleasure to walk with her. Burgoyne, as was frequently his fancy had driven his team himself. Fairfax had many times remarked: "That's the nigger of it."

Mrs. Fairfax sank into a chair as her husband and the countess started down the walk, and Burgoyne and his wife still lingered.

"Shall we not go?" Mrs. Burgoyne asked, and

Mrs. Fairfax thought she was curiously nervous and flurried in her manner.

"No hurry," Burgoyne answered. "It's quite a walk to the ruin, and Sally's a great talker. She'll have to hear the whole story over again."

While they waited and the horses stamped and impatiently threw up their heads and champed their bits, Colonel Fairfax was dragging out the last hour of his endurance of the society of the Countess Castlemere.

As the Burgoynes were about to go, Westlake returned from seeing the bridal party off. His sister exclaimed on seeing him:

"Oh George! I'm so glad you've come back. I was afraid you meant to stay in your office for the remainder of the day."

"In these regimentals?" glancing at his broadcloth. "I ought to have disappeared as did the bride and groom, put on my business suit, and then I could have utilized the afternoon."

"I'm glad you didn't. I don't want to be alone."

"Better invite the colonel to stay at home for a quiet visit. Where is he?"

"Gone to the ruin with the countess."

Westlake could see that his sister was immeasurably sad in spite of her gratified ambition in the fact that Zoe had married a title. Now that the daughter was gone, the husband and wife would realize how far apart they had drifted. In as much as he was capable of pity, Westlake was sorry for both. With all his soul he congratulated himself that if he only possessed single blessedness, he was totally exempt from the entanglement of multiplied misery.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

These two who walked amongst the shadows cast by the interlacing boughs of the beeches had nothing to say about the event of the morning. The new leaves were odorous in the sunshine and they rustled like little waves in the warm air.

The conversation of Colonel Fairfax with his handsome guest, though without embarrassing pause, yet had no element of geniality in it.

The countess said she hoped sometime to make her home in her father's land; that she would like a fine old place like this for her own. Fairfax registered a mental vow that she should never live on the farms until his head was cold. But, she continued, she feared her son would never become Americanized. Fairfax did not say, as, in the role of a pleased father-in-law he would have said, that he hoped his son-in-law might be induced to live in America, even in Kentucky, even in his own house. He wondered if the countess was expecting him to say something of this kind.

Instead, he said he thought it very strange that she felt any desire to return to the newness of America after so many years, certainly half the years of her life spent in the historic cities of the Old World.

"Ah!" and the Countess sighed as she leaned her folded arms on the window seat of what had been the drawing room. "There has never been anything in

any of the cities where we lived that could take the place of the old house, the house where I was—where I lived in my girlhood. I was born on the other side.”

“Ah indeed! I supposed you were American born.”

“No, my parents were American, but were in Europe for a long visit. I was brought home before I was old enough to remember it. Seems to me I would like to rebuild a place like this, with all its memories and its romance and ghosts stories, and make a home of it.”

“This will never be rebuilt with my sanction. The tragedy connected with the place was of such a terrible nature, the ruin must stand, a monument to the sins of the two races.”

“Did you ever institute systematic inquiries? or employ detectives in the case?”

“No, I never could see the necessity of that; and the war coming on almost immediately there were other things to think of.”

“Seems to me it’s strange you never had the least trace of ‘the girl known as Salome.’”

Fairfax started and turned upon the countess. The very words of his aunt’s will. The countess was absently gazing before her.

“But haven’t you been told? my men took the charred remains of the girl and Victor, Dr. Redfield’s valet out of the ruins.”

“Oh yes, I’ve been told, and I’ve been to the cemetery and seen the graves of the two.”

She paused, and Fairfax watching her face saw that she was smiling. What a strange, half barbaric creature was this with her voluptuous beauty, her

profusion of ornament and her foreign accent. After a little she spoke.

"But I've been told that the girl possessed a quantity of valuable jewels. What could have become of them?"

"We never knew. My own theory was that they had been hidden in some easily accessible place, and the accident to the powder in the strong room prevented their removal. According to that theory, the valuables may be discovered, some time, by chance."

"Colonel Fairfax; it seems to me that you were easily satisfied. Were you sure that the skeletons found there in that corner were really the remains of Victor and—the girl known as Salome?"

Again that sentence.

"Why, whose else could they have been? None of the slaves were missing, and Dr. Redfield was not in the habit of secreting cadavers like a student."

"No, but, doctors very frequently keep many ghastly souvenirs of their student days, and—"

Fairfax started as if electrified. The countess had entirely dropped her foreign accent. She stood laughing in his face. She raised her right hand, the lace fell away from her arm and there gleamed a bracelet that he had had made for Salome.

She touched it, a spring clicked softly, a golden lid lifted, his own face, painted on ivory lay within.

He seized her arm savagely.

"What trick is this? How did you come by that bracelet?"

"You gave it me, master, when you were my lover, almost my husband;" and a mocking laugh

rang out while she winced with the pain of his grasp on her arm.

Like the shifting figures of a kaleidoscope he saw it all. He remembered what he had not thought of in the years counted as the half of a long life, the two skeletons that Doctor Redfield had been forced to hide out of sight "making believe" they had been sent away and buried because of the superstitious fears of the slaves. Often when he and Salome were children they had followed the doctor to the underground part of the house, and trembling in their delightful horror they had insisted upon being shown the two ghastly things in their secret place near the strong room. They were told that one was a man, the other a woman, and Salome's father actually used them, to illustrate a few private lessons in physiology that he gave the children. Strange, Fairfax thought, now, that he had so entirely forgotten them, and as he loosed his hold on Salome's arm, he laughed.

"Well," he said, even now, I feel relieved that you did not perish in the fire, though this discovery confirms my first impression of the mixed origin of your son,—if he is your son?"

"Oh he's my son," and she laughed and clasped her hands. "This day finishes more than my most extravagant dreams dared to bid me hope on that other day when you made me your generous offer here in this room, instead of marriage. Then, I vowed, in some way to avenge myself. How, I did not know. Then I could think of nothing but burning your houses or killing you. I would have killed you, but I wanted you to suffer. If we had thought of it in time and divided the powder we'd have made

another bonfire of the other house while all the slaves were gathered about this one. But, it is better as it is. Yonder substantial mansion will be the home of my Guido after you and I are gone and the frail little Zoe too has followed the way that Marcia speeds so rapidly."

Fairfax stared at her in silence. She spoke now in the low, sweet voice he had known long ago. She gazed all about her as if her eyes had hungered for a glimpse of her home; and as if she could not fully enjoy it while she disguised her voice and her speech. While he listened he felt his brain refreshed, his burden lifted. The puzzle that had vexed his soul was explained, the mists were rolling away. He had found the thread that led him into this maze, a shameful, scarlet one, but there was another within his grasp, a silken and white one that would most surely lead him out of it.

"So," he said as Salome paused, "you married almost immediately after leaving this place?"

"Married! Who said I was married?"

He gazed at her in silence as she stood laughing.

"Why did you suppose I had been married?"

"I most naturally supposed that you were protected by the law in your motherhood."

"Why should I care for the law? Who of my relations was ever married before '63?"

"How do you come by your title?"

"How innocent and honest!" and she laughed immoderately. "What right had I to any name? What might I not call myself?"

"And, your son, of course has no name?"

"No more than has your Prax or Tim, or any of

them. Oh dear, oh dear, how scared Tim was when he saw Victor and me in the graveyard! John had written me how we had been given christian burial, and I could'nt wait until I could go by day-light to see the graves. I had more curiosity to see them than I had for you and Marcia. How queer that you and she should have married!"

"Does your son know your history, and his own?"

"Certainly he does. I've never deceived him for a minute since he's been old enough to understand."

"What do you call yourselves on the other side?"

"The same as we call ourselves here. Of course the Simon-Pure aristocracy know we are spurious, but, we have to be somebody. Old Luke Bedell provided handsomely both for me and the boy, but, he was like you; he didn't care to marry me."

"Old Luke Bedell, of Washington, the disreputable politician, the trickster at gambling, the rake? Is he the father of your illegitimate son?"

She lifted her right hand as if being sworn but answered nothing but a shout of laughter.

"And that boy is the husband of my daughter!"

"That winds up the statement of the case most satisfactorily," and she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Was this way of life that you chose deliberately so much better than what I offered you, to be accepted at your pleasure?"

"In that time there was neither better nor worse in anything. There was no good anywhere in all the world. I did evil for the purely malicious joy it gave me. I delighted in the degradation of myself because I hoped you would know of it, and break your

heart over it. I never dreamed of you being misled by the bones of those unknown paupers who had been the jest of a herd of lawless students before I was born."

There was a quaver in her voice for the first time, and she shot a quick angry glance at her host.

Fairfax laughed softly. A few hours ago he did not believe he would ever laugh again. Now, worse than he ever dreamed had befallen Zoe. The reality was so deeply base, so filthily fraudulent, the way out of it for her was plain.

"So we were both mistaken," he said. "I would rather have my mistake than yours. I am glad to know the truth. Knowing, I can go ahead with confidence. But, why do you deliberately run your head into this noose? Why have you told me all this?"

"What would I care to have accomplished all that I have if I left you to suppose Zoe had married a legitimately begotten man, and a title, no matter how much you might dislike my handsome Guido. I wanted you to know who will be master of Fairfax Farms. John opposed me; he wanted me to go in silence but, I couldn't bear to."

She leaned against the stone-wall and opened her lace parasol with its amber lining. It cast a glow over her face and her white hair. Fairfax very plainly saw the young Salome in this older, larger woman.

"So?" interrogatively smiling, "Who is John? Where did he live? Is he really your cousin?"

"Yes, he's my cousin. He's Victor's son. They belonged to the Burgoynes of New Orleans. Jocasta, my mother was Victor's sister, you remember. John had a chance to fill his pockets from the

Burgoyne safe before taking leave of them." She was again laughing.

"Thievery, incendiarism, bastardy;" Fairfax said quietly. "A fine alliance truly for my dainty daughter. Does Mrs. Burgoyne know of John's origin?"

"Yes. Her people were reformers. They lectured on the equality of the races. When she practiced what they preached they disowned and disinherited her. Now, she lives in constant fear of being found out the wife of a nameless ex-slave."

"I think you'd better go. They are waiting for you at the gate."

"You're not raging as I expected to see you. You don't care for Marcia's child?"

"Why should I rage? I've been groping in the dark ever since you came. I thank you for enlightening me. You shall see how much I care for Marcia's child. Of one thing be certain: Luke Bedell's son, and yours will never be master of Fairfax Farms."

"How will you prevent it?"

"You will probably learn before you leave Belaire. You have reckoned in this matter without—the son of your host."

"Adelaide's son! After the way she discarded you!"

"A bitter dose I grant you; but, we're all white folks, and Adelaide was my wife."

They had reached the gate. Burgoyne called pleasantly, though there was a quaver in his voice:

"Did you have a pleasant walk and talk?"

Salome was gazing on the ground. Was it possible that this, for what she had schemed would fail

at last? Fairfax answered: "Sorry to have kept you waiting John. Salome and I had so many things to talk about. Pity she didn't disclose her identity sooner."

He threw his hands behind him; he did not offer to assist his guest into her carriage.

Burgoyne's face paled under the thick yellow skin. When he first saw the two they were so quiet in their manners, he told his wife he'd 'bet fifty dollars' Salome had not told at last; but, when Fairfax spoke, the 'John' and 'Salome' told the whole story. That was the first move in retaliation. They had supposed that he would rave and storm in helpless rage, then keep in secrecy, probably from his delicate wife, the shameful story. For Zoe's sake too they thought he would be silent. These guesses only proved how little they knew him. He was a true descendant of Samson.

Mrs. Burgoyne leaned over the side of the carriage:

"Colonel Fairfax have pity on my innocent children. For their sake hide this disgraceful story."

"My child was made the victim of fraud and lies. You married this man, knowing he was a runaway, thieving slave. I shall not add to my daughter's degradation by trying to hide it. And now Salome, one last word to you. Since you have fully identified yourself to me, since you have confessed the crime of burning my house, I give you twenty-four hours to get yourself out of the state."

He turned abruptly, entered the gate, passed the ruin and disappeared up the path under the beeches. His head was cool and clear, every sense was alert and ready for action,

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mrs. Fairfax sat on the veranda with her brother. She had taken a shawl from the hall tree, and yet she shivered, and said, "I must go and take my medicine and rest awhile."

Westlake answered, "Yes, now that the excitement's over, you look very tired."

Still she lingered to talk over the wedding, and to say how pretty Zoe looked. What a beautiful tableau it was. Even her father, though so white and stern was never handsomer in his life. Westlake was quite in sympathy with his sister. Though he had said little in the presence of the colonel, either for or against the marriage, yet, what he did say had shown his brother-in-law his true sentiment. Fairfax had known that he stood alone in his disapproval of the foreigner. Westlake was saying: "Now if the colonel can manage, without committing himself too far, to put Adelaide's boy in old Treslyn's boots, both the youngsters will be provided for, very nicely. There need be no jealousy between you and Adelaide in regard to either money or position;" when he saw Fairfax coming up the sun-flecked walk. He had his hat in his hand, and as he approached, the two on the veranda saw how his face had changed. The sadness had disappeared. He looked as if at peace with all the world, and ready for a new lease of life and happiness.

"I guess the countess has reconciled him," Westlake said.

"I sincerely hope so," Mrs. Fairfax answered.

Then he was at the steps. Looking at his watch he called to a loitering boy on the lawn to go and have his horse brought round at once.

"Tell Pomp he must go with me. Before I go to change my clothes, I will tell you, Marcia, and you George, who it is in reality that Zoe has married."

Mrs. Fairfax felt her heart bound and then stand still. Was her daughter's fortune better than she had expected?

Her husband, seeing her rising and receding color, wondered, "Will it be safe to tell her? Can she bear it?" Westlake pulled himself up from his lounging position. Things must be all right, why else the Colonel's altered demeanor?

"I'm pressed for time," Fairfax said, "What I'm about to do, Marcia, I wish you to know, before it is done. Brace yourself for a surprise, and a bitter disappointment. We must make the best we can of a shocking bad bargain."

"Oh Jasper, what can it be!" she whispered.

"This woman," he said deliberately, "is my dead Uncle-in-law's illegitimate daughter Salome."

"O Jasper! No! She cannot be!"

"She proved herself to me beyond a doubt. Her son is also illegitimate. His father was the notorious old Luke Bedell."

"Jasper this cannot be true! Salome is dead, long ago. She lies buried in the church-yard yonder."

Fairfax hurried up the stairs followed by his wife

and her brother. While making a few changes in his clothing, he told them the whole story.

When it was finished, Westlake said:

"But it looks silly, unreasonable that she should tell you this. Why shouldn't she have kept it to herself?"

"Because she's the usual fool I reckon that the average villain is. She was surprised that I was not in rage. Evidently she expected to see me paw the air and tear up the earth, and probably go off at once by the paralysis or apoplexy route, and she would walk into Zoe's inheritance. But, I'm still in the saddle, and ready to out-wit a regiment of niggers, with Burgoyne to lead them."

"Oh but what will you do? What can you do?" Mrs. Fairfax wailed.

"I'm going to telegraph Zoe at Farmingham. The train stops there thirty minutes for supper. I'll tell her the whole story, and ask her to come home. A separation can be arranged very easily."

"And if she doesn't come? Oh she was so earnestly in love with Guido, and I thought it so beautiful!"

"I thought it a stupendous fraud, but not as big as it is. We can't force her to come back. If she doesn't come, then I shall call upon a boy who was at the office to see me yesterday. I shall be in a proper frame of mind to make very liberal terms with him."

"Oh Jasper you won't disinherit our poor child?"

"No, I shall not disinherit her. I'll always provide for her," then with a smile that looked amazingly like a sneer, he glanced at Westlake, continuing:—

"No doubt she'll have her Uncle's fortune too, since he has been in favor of this brilliant alliance."

Westlake rammed his hands deep into his trousers pockets, and muttered a curse on his own stupidity.

The colonel's toilet was finished, and picking up his hat and gloves he said: "No, I'll not disinherit Zoe, and she shall come home whenever she wishes to, and stay as long as she pleases; but if that damned darkey bastard ever sets foot on the farms while I live, I'll shoot him."

He hurried down the stairs. His horse was at the door; he swung himself into the saddle and his wife heard the clattering hoofs on the drive. When all was quiet, she called Ceely, had herself undressed and threw herself on her couch, the most thoroughly miserable woman alive.

Fairfax went straight to the telegraph office and great was the surprise of the operator at the message. It was "just like the colonel," everybody said when the whole story was made public.

After the message was sent, he walked up and down, sat for a minute and read a city paper, made computations in a note book, and finally walked to the bank, only a block away, saying, "I'll be back in a minute. Keep whatever comes for me."

So it was, that as he came in a few minutes later, his answer was just ticking off. He sighed heavily as he read:

"Forgive me, papa, I love Guido. He is my husband. I care not what else he may be."

It was signed only, "Zoe Fairfax." Poor child! there was no other name for her.

The correspondent of a city paper put himself in the door as Fairfax was about to pass.

"Pardon me, Colonel Fairfax; may I have these matters for my letter?"

"If you'll tell the plain truth about them, yes. The story is bad enough, there's no need of embellishment. Get a copy of this telegram from the operator. I want this for Mrs. Fairfax."

Again he mounted his horse, and, in a few minutes he was ringing the bell at the door of Senator Cogswell's house.

"Is Mr. Fairfax in the house?" he asked of the boy who opened the door.

"Yes sah. Step in de pa'lo'," and he disappeared up the stairs with the colonel's card.

"What can it mean?" Mrs. Cogswell had wondered when she saw Fairfax alight at the gate. She was more than ever mystified by the boy's message.

Jasper had but just come in. He had brought Mr. Carleton from the station, and was finishing his account of his call upon his father.

When the boy handed him the card, saying "De Colonel's in de pa'lo'" Jasper said to his mother and Mrs. Cogswell:

"Now this is beautifully polite of the colonel to return my call on a day like this. Oh, by the way: I saw my little sister as she was stepping into the coach. Such a pretty, delicate pink and white girl! A real carnation! isn't she Mrs. Cogswell?"

"Yes Zoe's very pretty and sweet. Such a pity;" and she shook her head sadly.

"Now dear," said Mrs. Fairfax, "whatever your

father's errand may be, don't vex him. Be patient and considerate. No doubt he's very unhappy."

"Now listen to me, Mother Adelaide;" and he held her hands and gave her a little shake. "Wouldn't you better run down stairs and tell the colonel to be considerate? If he isn't I'll—black his eye;" and he left her, throwing a laughing glance from the hall below.

"Come away dear," Mrs. Cogswell said to Mrs. Fairfax as she leaned over the baluster. "Come into my room and wait. There'll be no trouble. I'm sure the colonel will do what is right. He's been so troubled over this love affair, and his wife has opposed him, all the way, and nobody knows who these people are, only they're relations of John Burgoyne. Now that it's all over the colonel will do as he's done before; in time of trouble, just endure it and make the best of it. You may be sure nobody 'll ever catch him whimpering."

Fairfax was walking up and down the long room. As he heard his son come in he turned and advanced to meet him, extending his hand.

"You said yesterday you would like to be friends with me:. Are you still of the same mind?"

"Indeed I am, Colonel. Without going into the ethics of the situation, or drawing any lines, it seems to me, that meeting, just as any two persons meet, we might find each other pleasant. In spite of our difference of opinion in regard to some matters, I don't mind saying that I like you immensely."

The face was so bright, the eyes so fearless, the pressure of the hand so firm and cordial.

Fairfax smiled: "You are certainly generous.

I cannot tell you how pleased I am to see evidence of so many of the best traits of both your mother's family and my own, in your character. You wondered yesterday what had happened me that had sent me to the devil. It was a disagreeable truth plainly spoken;—"

"Colonel, I beg your pardon;—"

"Not in the least necessary. I'm not here to make you take it back. The fact is I've been puzzled for some time over the same query. To-day, after—the little girl had gone, I found it all out. I want to tell you about it. It will fully explain my change, not of heart, but of action."

So, in one short terse chapter, the son had the story of his father's youth, and of the consequences of that one intended sin that had only this day overtaken him. He spared himself in nothing. If this boy had trodden forbidden paths, then he knew that his father had sinned sufficiently to make him forgiving. If he had lived the life of an ascetic, then, appreciating the lofty strength of his father's character he must know that there had been for him, something sweetly alluring in sin.

The story was finished with the confession of Salome. The colonel said:

"I have been wondering, ever since I discovered Zoe's infatuation for the fellow if anything I had ever done was accountable for it. I like to gather in my own harvest if possible. I find now that if I had employed detectives instead of indulging in sentiment at the time of the fire it would have been much more sensible, and would have spared me remorse then in regard to Salome, and to-day as concerns Zoe's posi-

tion in life. But we can only use the light we happen to have, and take the consequences of any mistakes we make. Everything has seemed to work like a charm in favor of Salome's scheme for possession of the farms; but, I still hold a higher card than the one she has taken, and, I have the last play."

When his father ceased speaking, young Fairfax sat silent for a moment. A smile broke over his face, then he laughed outright.

"Colonel, I beg your pardon; but, it's such a pity you're not in position to enjoy this stupendous joke."

"Oh I think I appreciate it," and he laughed quietly as he had done at the ruin. "I was so relieved to find that Salome and Victor were two reckless darkey fire-bugs instead of blundering martyrs that I could have thrown up my hat and yelled; but, I still had Zoe to think of."

"Poor little girl! Clay Jerome was very fond of her."

"Yes, I know it, and I had my hopes, but, there's no use of saying anything more about it;—" then he told of his message to Zoe and her answer.

"And now," he continued, "since that old sin has run me to cover, and another is fast after me, I cry peccavi and surrender. Lord Treslyn and I are on the same scent for an heir. I am ahead, and,—"

"Oh Colonel Fairfax! No! Believe me that was not my errand here. My mother will never consent to it!"

The colonel caught his breath. "I am very thoroughly satisfied that it was not your intention, in coming here, to claim Fairfax Farms; but, when one embarks in an enterprise, there's not always a cer-

tainty as to the outcome. Unfortunately for me your mother has been left out of the affairs of my life for so long, I find it impossible to consider her now, excepting vicariously."

"But I cannot agree to accept what should belong to my—to your daughter."

"You'll not be asked to do that. Your sister will be amply provided for. By the terms of the will I shall make, you become her trustee if both of you outlive me."

"Colonel, I can't! Absolutely I cannot do it!"

"You can, and you will! You'll have Fairfax Farms. Do you suppose I'm going to have that low-down nigger tramping over the soil that's rich with the lives and toil of five generations of us? Not unless I die within the next five minutes. Here comes Cogswell. He's my man of business in matters of this kind. Send that hall boy for your Englishman. I want this all settled at once. Flash may throw me on my way home."

Still Jasper hesitated, smiling and remonstrating. He was cut short with:

"Come, sir, I'm accustomed to obedience;" a pause, then, "from boys; I confess women are too much for me."

Cogswell came in as Carleton came down the stairs, and the two lawyers joined the father and son. Colonel Fairfax hurried the matter through. The English document was filled out, and amidst Carleton's "Bless my souls!" and "God bless the boys!" and other expressions of delight, Cogswell was given a brief synopsis of the disclosures following the wed-

ding, and directions for the drawing up of a will disposing of Fairfax Farms.

"And now," said the colonel rising briskly, "I must hurry home. I left Mrs. Fairfax on the verge of distraction; but these matters had to be attended to. When do you sail?" turning to Carleton.

"Just as soon as this young man can make himself ready. We will leave for Washington to-morrow. The precarious state of Lord Treslyn's health makes the utmost haste necessary. I want him to see the heir I have found for him, and to have all legal formalities complied with while he is still alive."

"Yes, yes," Fairfax responded. "I'll see you, Jasper, before you go,—probably at the station."

He was nearing the door, accompanied by the three, and by the Jeromes, father and son, who had come in. In the hall, he extended his hand to his son.

"Allow me to be the first to congratulate the new Lord Treslyn."

His hand was clasped cordially, earnestly, and the other hand of the young man was on his shoulder.

"Thank you a thousand times; but I want to say that I'd rather stand here, Jasper Fairfax Junior, than to be—Queen Victoria."

Such a chorus of laughter was borne to the two anxious women up-stairs.

Colonel Fairfax was escorted to the gate by his son and the two Jeromes. They went down the walk still laughing, and Pomp, seeing his master in such fine spirits showed all his big teeth as Jasper said to him:

"Darkey, you want to lead your master's horse every step of the way home. He looks dangerous."

"W'y Mas' Jaspa," he answered "dat hoss's gentle as lil lamb. Youens des come to de fa'm some day an' see."

"All right," Jasper answered.

"This is your new Boss, Pomp, sure enough," Fairfax said, and then with an exchange of goodbyes and exaggerated military salutes, master and man rode away.

Jasper ran upstairs. In the hall he saw his mother, half hidden by the window drapery. Mrs. Cogswell tiptoed away with a signal to him. He stole quietly across the room, and silently clasped his mother in his arms. She turned a white, white face to meet him. Tenderly he kissed her, over and over again.

"Precious little mama! She made a big mistake too, didn't she?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Dinneh's waitin' sah," Prax said as he received his master in the hall.

"Is your mistress down?"

"No sah. She's not comin'. She's got a bad headache."

"Then let dinner wait a minute longer, or tell Mr. George not to wait, while I go and see Mrs. Fairfax."

Lying on her couch in the dimly lighted room, her head swathed in napkins, her cheeks pale and sunken, great purple hollows below her eyes, Mrs. Fairfax bore no resemblance to the lovely, fragile, pink cheeked matron of the morning. Her husband knelt beside her and clasped her hands.

"Did Zoe answer? Is she coming?"

"She answered, but she's not coming."

"Oh!" Mrs. Fairfax closed her eyes, pressing two big tears into the purple hollows below them.

"Dear," he said, "we must make the best we can of it. After all, little Zoe's happiness is the one thing we wish to secure. This nameless boy may prove kind, and loving, and all that she desires. Since she will not come back to us, let us hope that she will be happy in her choice."

"You can comfort yourself. You have another child."

"That other child doesn't make Zoe less dear. That other child may prove a protector for our dear girl

after you and I are gone. To-day, for the first time since I heard of the birth of my son, I was glad of his existence. To-day I would be utterly beaten if 'twere not for him."

"Does he resemble you?"

"Very much. I hope he may be a better man than I've been, and make fewer mistakes. Now dear, you must have a cup of tea, and something nice to eat. You're quite worn out. You've had a great deal to do and bear that never should have come near you. But, we can't always take all the consequences of our sins. How I regret that, since I am responsible for all this trouble I could not have known, and been less of a savage."

"Ah, I only wish," but the trembling voice broke down in a fit of sobbing.

"There, dear, there, darling wife, don't bother to wish anything. Each one of us did what we thought was best. It is all past. In the future we must try to keep Zoe within call. We'll go, as soon as you care to, and find her. If she's unhappy and would dislike to come here amongst old friends, we will live in any place she prefers. We'll turn gypsies and live in tents for the rest of our lives, if she wishes it."

Mrs. Fairfax opened her swollen eyes. Her husband smiled at her, but, there was an unmistakable tone of pity running through his words. This was so different from what she had been expecting. She had dreaded his coming home, no matter what would be the answer to his message to Zoe. She had been so sure there was nothing in the future for her but reproaches, or the lofty scorn of silence. Here now, her husband took all the blame upon himself, and was

ready to do anything for her own comfort and repose of mind. The future that she had pictured through the long afternoon as full of storms and coldness she now saw, in a tempered peaceful light. Her husband's words and manners were as soothing to her as a gentle narcotic. Even the few words in regard to the son had comfort in them. She needed no assurance that this son had heard no disparaging word of her.

Then she wondered if her husband had seen his son's mother; but fearing she would be misunderstood she would not ask. Why should she care if he had seen her, or if he had not? Could she question his loyalty to her now? If he could come to her with words of love and soothing after passing through this day, what could he not do in the greatness of his heart, the strength of his soul?

What had she done in all the best days of her life to deserve the love of this man? Being his wife, receiving all these years his affection and care, she felt that universal womanhood was honored in her. Had not the sacrifice made by Adelaide Francis proved that she would have better deserved the love and protection of this strong nature through all her days?

It was only right; it was the justice of that eternal principle that at last arbitrates all endeavor, that Adelaide's son and her own daughter occupied their positions in relation to the father.

Fairfax kissed the wan cheek and went down stairs. At dinner he told Westlake of all that had been done, towards putting young Jasper in the proper position as heir to the farms as well as the English property, adding:

"Now the next thing to do is to smoothe away every care and annoyance for Marcia. I've told her that we would go to Europe as soon as she's ready, but, you know, as well as I do, what her state of health is. After she rallies from the weariness of the last few weeks, and from the shock of to-day's discoveries, she may be much better than she's been lately. But, I'm doubtful, and Henry doesn't give me any encouragement. What I'm coming at is, that if we find she's not strong enough to cross the water, I want you to go. Zoe won't deceive you."

"All right, I'll do it."

"If men could look ahead occasionally, and see the harvesting of their sins, I fancy the world would rapidly grow better."

Westlake laughed. "Old man, first thing you know, you'll be sailing round here on a pair of wings. Your conscience is a sort of foundling hospital. It takes in all the sins that are lying about unclaimed."

"No hardly that. I know my own, and I sincerely wish that Nemesis would scourge me for them instead of putting my helpless girl in the pillory."

They left the table and Fairfax went up to inquire about his wife. She was sound asleep. He came down, and finding Westake on the veranda, they sat together and smoked for a half hour. When a feeling of drowsiness stole over the colonel, he wondered at it, then remembered, as if it had happened years ago, how he had passed the night before.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Colonel Fairfax was awakened next morning by the capricious trilling of a mocking-bird near his window. At first he heard it as a part of his dreams; and, in the delicious languor that lingers after a long, healthful sleep he lost all records of time. He knew that he was at home, but, was he not a child, and would he not hear the cautious step of his mother or Sheba stealing in to drive the bird away. No, it kept on singing. He must be older. It was vacation time. His mother was gone, his father an invalid from that accident in the woods with his rifle. The bird would trill on until it was hungry or weary. The monotony of the notes at last fully wakened him. Then his first sensation was that something strange and pleasant had happened or was about to happen. There was a delightful sense of newness, of a fresh beginning. He found himself drowsily repeating, "Old things have passed away." The sound of his voice, and the words made it all clear.

Springing up, he exclaimed: "Oh it's the boy! the boy! What a refreshingly honest, generous, fearless rascal he is!"

He dressed himself hurriedly, pushing Prax about and jeering at his awkwardness as he had done when they were boys together; and Prax answered, "Yes, Mas' Fai'fax" until his master wheeled upon him and rushed him into a corner.

"What do you mean? How much older am I now than I was a few days ago?"

"W'y Mas' Fai'fax I dunno how old youens is any day."

"Well then, what's the reason I'm Fairfax now, after being Jasper always before?"

"W'y yo' see Mas' Fai'fax, odder day, I done see Mas' Jaspa, swingin' long de street wid Misteh Clay Jerome lak' de whole place was'nt mo'n half big nuff fo' him, an' I done tole all de niggahs roun' hyah, dat w'en a man has a fine son lak dat he kin affo'd heaps o' style, an' I'se not gwine fo' to call youens Mas' Jaspa, no mo'."

Fairfax stood with arms akimbo, laughing silently during this explanation.

"All right Prax, I'll forgive you if you call me Dan Tucker with an excuse like that. Here's something to use for drinks to your young master's health. Probably we can have him here for his next birthday anniversary."

Mrs. Fairfax came into the breakfast room, pale, quiet, sad, but with no symptoms of tears:

Fairfax said as he was going:

"I'm in a hurry this morning, or I'd ask you to go with me. Would you like to take a drive up the river road later in the day? While the afternoon sun is warm?"

"Yes, very much."

"Then I'll come home and lunch with you at one o'clock, and we'll go and see the Spring coming along the river."

He stooped and kissed her, and was gone.

At ten o'clock he entered the waiting room of the

railway station. The train was due in a few minutes. He looked about hurriedly, but amongst the dozen or two of persons there, he saw neither Jasper nor Carleton. But, he saw some one else;—a tall, slender elegant woman in a close fitting suit of softest gray. At the same instant she saw him. Their eyes met, and she would have turned away, but he advanced quickly to where she stood.

Extending his hand, he said: "Adelaide, this is too good to believe. I came to finish a little business with Jasper."

"I'm sure he'll be here soon. He and Mr. Carleton are together, looking up some boxes we brought with us from Lexington."

"How little you've changed."

"Yes? I'm afraid my mirror tells a different story."

"Any change there may be has only added to your beauty."

She lifted her hand, a smile like sunshine broke over her fine face.

"I never knew you as a flatterer."

"No, you knew me as a dealer in plain truth. You know too that this subject was one perfectly understood between us."

"Yes, but we are old now."

He laughed: "I see pretty well yet, and I hope you are not so old but that there are many happy years for you in the position now open to this splendid boy," as Jasper approached.

"Ah, I'm so glad!" he exclaimed, as he grasped his father's hand and glanced from one to the other.

"I'm so glad," he repeated, "that you came to see us off and wish us *bon voyage*."

"I still had a trifle of business with you. Here's a letter of credit—"

"Now, now Colonel," and he backed away with uplifted hands.

"Young man," Fairfax said with great show of seriousness, "I'm afraid your mother has neglected one part of your training. I don't know what sort of a bout you and I will have, some day to prove which is the better man. Put this in your pocket, or I must insist on your mother carrying it for you."

It was over as a joke, and before another word was said, Carleton hurried in. The train was about to stop.

Fairfax shook hands with the lawyer with hearty words of farewell and invitation to return. He stood bareheaded while he clasped the slender gloved hand of his son's mother and whispered.

"Goodbye, Adelaide. God bless you and—our son."

Then, with his soul in his eyes he turned to his son. They clasped hands.

"Goodbye Jasper." His voice trembled, his mouth twitched under his mustache.

"Goodbye," the pause of a breath, then—"father." and a mist hid the laughing light of the young gray eyes.

"Oh my boy! my boy! Goodbye!"

For an instant, Adelaide dropped her own on the two clasped hands. There was an indescribable look in her eyes as she turned them from father to

son, then she hurried away. Carleton handed her into the coach, and Jasper followed her.

Colonel Fairfax stood, hat in hand and watched the train until it disappeared. Then, as in a dream he walked towards his office. He had but one thought: "Adelaide:—the truest, most womanly woman of them all."

He could not say that the meeting was wholly unexpected, undesired. It might have been avoided. He had not realized the power that this wife of his youth still held over him. When he saw her, there was nothing to be done but what was done.

He tried to recall the resentment he had felt towards her. It was gone. In its place stood a question: Had any other man in the North, or in the South, sacrificed as much as he had to prove his faith in his opinions?

Slowly he walked the streets, swiftly his thoughts travelled. They were away hundreds of years, thousands of miles. He thought of a profligate king, lover of many women, husband of many wives, father of two daughters and a puny son. When he came to die, of all these women, wives and paramours, only one was remembered. He directed that his body should be laid beside his beloved wife, Jane Seymour, mother of his son.

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